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PRIVATE
COMMERCIAL SCHOOLS

MANHATTAN
and the BRONX

REPORT OF

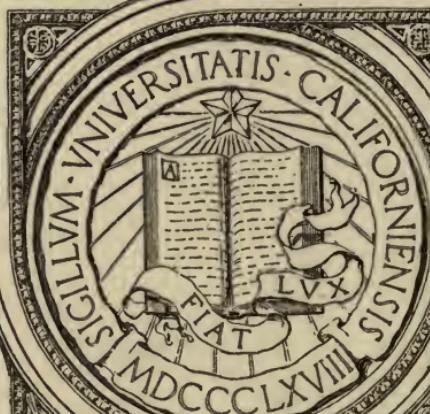
The Committee to Investigate Private Commercial Schools

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City of New York

1918

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PRIVATE
COMMERCIAL SCHOOLS
MANHATTAN
and the BRONX

BY

BERTHA STEVENS

Author, Boys and Girls In Commercial Work, Cleveland Foundation
Education Survey, 1916. Co-author, Commercial Work and
Training for Girls, Macmillan, 1915



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The committee desires to acknowledge gratefully the voluntary aid of persons and organizations listed below. Most of the persons whose services were received, helped in the interviews with public school children. Miss Grace Speir, Mrs. J. S. Ward and Mrs. Edgar Strakosch contributed time in especially generous measure. The organizations permitted the investigation freedom to use their files, aided in giving an English test to graduates of commercial schools who came to them as applicants for employment, or contributed office facilities and clerical help. In addition to voluntary aid, the investigation had the assistance of Miss Jeannette Eaton in field work.

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ALLIANCE EMPLOYMENT BUREAU

BUREAU OF ATTENDANCE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

EXTENSION ROOMS FOR COMMERCIAL WORKERS

FEDERATED EMPLOYMENT BUREAU FOR JEWISH GIRLS

HUDSON GUILD

METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

PUBLIC EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT BUREAU (CITY)

STATE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT BUREAU

VACATION WAR RELIEF EMPLOYMENT BUREAU

YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

YOUNG WOMEN'S HEBREW ASSOCIATION

*Now associated with another organization.

FORE-WORD.

TO THE PUBLIC:

The beginning of the European War manifested itself almost immediately in the disorganization created among the working classes. Hundreds of applicants for work appeared, women never before thrown on their own resources suddenly finding themselves forced to earn a livelihood. Out of the chaos a few glaring facts presented themselves and obtruded as a real problem on the community; a mass of uneducated, ill-equipped women and girls entering the field as office workers, secretaries, etc. This question bore analysis, wherein lay the fault and how could this evil be remedied. With this object in view a survey of commercial schools was undertaken with the hope that the findings would appeal to the understanding public. Girls by nature ill-equipped for office work, leaving school at an early age, with little or no high-school training should be dissuaded from following a commercial calling. Certain educational requirements should be essential for entering these schools. Proper supervision and control of business schools should be mandatory.

This volume in concise, comprehensive form pictures for us the actual condition of the pupils in commercial schools and the type of graduates frequently encountered, so handicapped by lack of proper academic foundation as to make progress and advancement in their line of work almost impossible. By raising the standards and demanding higher qualifications for entrance to the business schools we are aspiring to improve economic conditions and to elevate the type of youthful office workers; and we are desirous of enlisting the cooperation of the intelligent public to help us in the realization of our aims.

MADELEINE BORG,
Chairman of the Committee.

CHAPTER 1.

THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THIS STUDY.

The purpose of this study has been to find out some of the causes which produce, in New York City, a large number of unemployable stenographers; and to make recommendations of a fundamental sort. The primary concern of the study has been, not the schools, but the workers.

A seventeen year old girl came into the City Public Employment Bureau, bringing with her a card of introduction from a prominent institution. The card read, "Introducing Miss Sarah Levine, a stenographer who is beginning her business life. I think she would make good if given an opportunity. Can you help her start?" Here was a presentable looking girl with an encouraging introduction. On the employment director's desk lay an employer's call for a stenographer who would be taken on trial, at first, in temporary work. It was a good opening with the possibility of permanency.

Usually the City Public Employment Bureau sent new applicants to a central office to be given an efficiency and capacity test; but the employer was in a hurry, and the girl was at hand. By way of compromise the employment director decided to give her a brief test, himself. The short letter he then dictated we reproduce here, showing the false starts she made, as well as the completed final sheet. It is not necessary to say that this stenographer was not, in the end, referred to the position.

FIRST ATTEMPT—ALTHOUGH MISS L. HAD BEEN SHOWN WHERE CARBON PAPER WAS KEPT, SHE USED LETTER HEAD, AND THE WRONG LETTER HEAD, FOR THE SECOND SHEET.

Mr

 York, New York

SECOND ATTEMPT—WRONG LETTER HEAD. LETTER HEAD, UP-SIDE DOWN, USED FOR SECOND SHEET.

← New York, N. Y., July, s28, 1916.

Mr. Joyn, Anderson,

131, East 23rd St

Wait Association for Labor Legislation

THIRD AND LAST ATTEMPT—MISS L. SUBMITTED THIS AFTER 21 MINUTES AND THEN ASKED TO BE ALLOWED TO WRITE IT AGAIN.

New York, N. Y. July, 28, 1916.

Mr. John B. Anderson
131 East 23rd St.

Wait ssociation for Labor Legislation.

The bearer Miss Levine, recommended to me by Mr. of Settlement. She is not a graduate from School but has attended it for six months and feels as she is competent. She has not been previously employed and I therefore intended to send her direct to the "Trade Extension Room" for test and rate. However as you ask me to be sure and send you some one on trial and temporary work to-day I will give her the opportunity and also that she may be able to do the work and satisfy your present need.

One may well be sorry for the employer who has to be annoyed with girls like this one, or for the employment director who has to take the responsibility for placing them; but one should be most sorry for the girl herself. She had probably worked hard at her stenographic training, and she had spent money that may have cost considerable sacrifice. When she came seeking her first position, fortified with the introductory card, no doubt she thought she really was a stenographer, and that the reward of her work and sacrifice was at hand. Instead, she was to learn that she could not give satisfaction; that positions were to be found with difficulty, and that when she did secure them they were soon to be lost, because she could not make good.

†Correct form, Mr. John B. Andrews, American Association for Labor Legislation.

*Correct form, Trade Extension Rooms.

There are many hundreds of young office workers in New York City of the calibre of this girl. Employers, employment bureaus and social agencies know it. Many of them have, in their files, first hand evidence of the quality of the work which these young people offer. And, many girls, like this girl, have attended commercial schools for a period approximating six months and, at the end of that time, have left whether graduated or not. To inquire into the causes which produce the city's host of incapable stenographic workers, and to recommend fundamental changes, the present survey was made.

The field of the survey covers private commercial schools of Manhattan and the Bronx. The effort has been made to learn something of all the schools, and to select for direct, detailed investigation those schools which are largely patronized by children of elementary school preparation. There are about thirty schools of this class. As a preliminary step, we desired to get an appreciation of the situation from many angles. Interviews, seventy-six in number, were held therefore with the following persons:

Public Education Officials, State and City.

Principals and Teachers in Public Commercial Schools, New York City.

Directors of Various Private Organizations Concerned with Education. (Local, state and national.)

Former Managers of Private Commercial Schools in New York City.

Persons in Charge of Commercial Instruction in Philanthropic Institutions in New York City.

Officers and members of Associations Seeking to Raise the Standard of Commercial Education.

The Conductor of Tests for a Typewriter Agency.

Employers of Young Office Workers.

Representatives of the Stenographers' Union.

With a view to securing names or records of girls and boys who had attended private commercial schools of Manhattan and the Bronx, an examination was made of the files of fifteen public and private organizations, ten of which

were employment bureaus. Through the aid of these organizations we were able to get specific information concerning 1,682 young people, under twenty-one years of age, who have gone out from private commercial schools of Manhattan and the Bronx since 1913. Some of this information was in the form of occupational records; some was in the form of specimen letters written by applicants; and, in other cases, the information came through our home or office interviews with girls and boys whose names and addresses the organizations had supplied. For each succeeding chapter we have shown, in a foot note, the specific data upon which the information and conclusions of that chapter are based.

This study started with a question, not a conclusion. The employment bureaus of New York City have a large demand for stenographers; and they have a large supply of candidates for stenographic work. But calls go unfilled because the applicants are unsuitable, incompetent, or inadequately trained. The question is, what causes this situation? A complete answer could be approached by an examination of every training center in New York City—private, parochial, philanthropic, public. This study has made a start by covering the private schools. But, let it be remembered that, in making this study, there has been no predisposition against any private school. The primary concern has been not the schools, but the workers. There are several private commercial schools in New York City, some large and some small, which are clearly contributing to the city's needs; and to these the unfavorable generalizations of this report do not apply.

CHAPTER 2.

A GENERAL SURVEY OF THE SCHOOLS.

Manhattan and the Bronx have 67 private commercial schools. In a group of 40, which includes all the larger schools, the day registration in the course of a year approximates 7,000; the night 6,000. Girls make up 85% of day and 60% of night registration.

Most students are 15 and 16 years of age and are graduates of elementary schools; most of them take a course which includes stenography and bookkeeping, lasts six or seven months and costs \$10 a month.

Few teachers have had normal training. No normal training in specific commercial subjects is available. Most teachers conduct classes day and night.

Most schools try to find their graduates' first positions; but a number of them accept for graduates a wage of \$5 or \$6 or place them in clerical positions which do not make use of their stenographic training.

There is little rivalry between private and public commercial schools; but the competition among private schools is active and sometimes unscrupulous.

Private schools sometimes close suddenly, with little or no warning to pupils. This was true of three schools in Manhattan last year.

Private commercial schools have been the discoverers and pathfinders in commercial education. They antedate public commercial schools or courses in New York City by 37 years.

This investigation has learned of sixty-seven private schools for business training, located in Manhattan and the Bronx. This number does not include schools maintained by charitable and religious interests. These sixty-seven

Chapter 2 is based upon the following data:

Direct investigation of 31 private commercial schools, detailed records being made of observations, and of interviews with the managers or principals. Two visits or more to all schools except the smallest. Study of the catalogs of these 31 schools with reference to course of study, cost, etc.

Records of visits made by Bureau of Attendance to 40 private commercial schools.

Lists of private commercial schools—published in Patterson's directories, Trow's directories, Telephone Red Books, and the directory of the Educational Aid Society.

Interviews, with workers, with regard to the quality of instruction at the private commercial schools which they attended. Records made, in detail.

Interviews with students and other persons regarding the character of three schools which closed suddenly. Records made, in detail.

schools are spread over a wide area; yet they are centered, to some extent, as follows:

Vicinity of City Hall
Lower East Side
Central Manhattan
Vicinity of 125th Street and Fifth Avenue
Tremont

There are a few scattered schools not included in this grouping. Two divergent objectives in location are easily discernible—one to place the school in the heart of a business section with a view to giving the impression of close touch with business and for the sake of placement relations with employers; and one to place it in a neighborhood of the sort of homes from which the school will expect to draw its pupils.

It has been impossible to find any complete information about the number of boys and girls educated annually by private commercial schools. From the Bureau of Attendance, whose agents visited private schools in the fall of 1916, we have figures for day and night registration at forty commercial schools of Manhattan and the Bronx. The schools which were not reported upon are known to be the smaller ones. The aggregate for day pupils, both boys and girls, is 4,516 and for night pupils 4,063. Among day pupils, girls made up 85 per cent; among night pupils, 60 per cent. The maximum registration for a single school is 550. These figures do not, however, represent the year's total, because nearly all private schools have at least two shifts in a year's time and many schools have more than two. In the case of schools which have two shifts it is generally true that the second or summer shift is only two-thirds to one-half the size of the fall and winter shift. But the shifts are overlapping rather than consecutive. We believe it is a con-

servative estimate to say that the number of day pupils registered at these forty private commercial schools during the past year was 7,000, and the number of night pupils was 6,000.*

SCHOOLS GROUPED ACCORDING TO TYPES.*

From the sixty-seven private commercial schools of Manhattan and the Bronx, we have selected thirty-one for special investigation. These selected schools include all the larger ones, those which are most active in soliciting eighth grade pupils in the public schools, and those which offer special inducements in time or cost. Schools for experts and those which could not be entered by inexperienced graduates from the public schools, we have not included. Judged by general standards of efficiency and reliability our thirty-one investigated schools seem to fall into five groups, thus: Group I, made up of schools *superior* in their equipment and in the calibre of their teaching force and students; Group II, representing *competent* schools which have good equipment and good teachers but students of varied types, less discriminately selected than in the case of the foregoing group; Group III, schools *cheap* in equipment, personnel and methods of advertising, and caring more for speed and numbers than for individual excellence; Group IV, made up of schools of *low standard*, whose meagre equipment and dirty, neglected classrooms cannot expect to do more than prepare students to enter low grade positions; Group V, representing schools which are *unscrupulous* in their dealings with their students or the public. In educational facilities the schools of Group V are similar to the schools of Groups III or IV. The methods they employ are set forth in Chapters 4 and 5.

*In 1916, 1,687 pupils were graduated from commercial courses in the High Schools of New York City. This figure does not include persons who took commercial subjects in academic courses.

*For number of schools included in each group see Table 4, page 33.

It is possible that the characteristics of these groups may be more clearly recognized if some quotations are made from the visitor's recorded impressions of schools and managers:

SCHOOLS OF GROUP I.

This school is as impressive in its dignity and beauty as many private academic schools are One has a feeling that educational purpose and high business ideals are as important to the school as the success of its commercial enterprise. It gives the impression of being, if not keenly alive to changing demands in business, at least well deserving of its established reputation for thoroughness and quality.

The distinction of this school seems to be its careful training of pupils, its high minimum wage and the confident assurance of success which lifts it above the level of unscrupulous or undignified competition. It impressed the visitor as a good, wide-awake business school wherein students could find efficient, specialized training; but there was no discernible atmosphere of idealism or general educational interest.

SCHOOLS OF GROUP II.

The chief asset of the school is the personality of the principal and the shorthand teacher. This was shown in their wholesome, dignified appearance, their earnestness in dealing with the pupils, and their direct and intelligent discussion of school matters with the visitor. The place was clean and honest, and one would not be afraid to recommend it to a poor young person in search of specific training.

The proprietor, a scholarly looking man, said he had heard of this investigation and proceeded to ask a few direct and very reasonable questions regarding its method and purpose. He is a man of intelligence

and culture, and well informed in matters relating to education generally. The admirable organization and equipment of his own school are evidence of his standards. One wondered why, with all this, so few students of maturity or more than elementary education were attracted to it.

SCHOOLS OF GROUP III.

This is a small, makeshift sort of a school, crowded into a few rooms on the second floor of a store building. Two distinct impressions came to the visitor at once: the cheap character of the school and the plausible, intelligent discussion of the principal, who is quick-minded and very alert to the investigator's point of view. If the principal practised his ideas, the school ought to be a fine thing—which it does not appear to be. The whole enterprise seemed shoddy, as if undercapitalized.

The school in general, gives the impression of living by its wits and of being "up to the minute" in new methods and new ideas in commercial education and in its policy of adaptability to conditions; but it seemed to spread itself too thin. We did think, however, that the purpose of the school is to be frankly honest in all its representations.

SCHOOLS OF GROUP IV.

The first reaction was that nothing good could be said of the school. It seemed to be making its money by fitting low grade pupils for low grade positions, and to be doing this in the kindly guise of working for the good of the young and for the promotion of efficiency. The manager had an air of fatherly kindness and showed a certain subtlety in giving all the right answers. But, before the visit was over, the

investigator was impressed with the relation of good will existing between teachers and pupils; and, also, she felt that the degree of attention the teachers secured was a thing to be commended.

The emphasis of the school's advertising and the remarks of the principal lead one to suppose that this school considers itself a sort of social center or settlement for its foreign neighbors. In conversation the principal seemed intelligent, very much in earnest and alert to general questions of commercial education; but the dark, dingy classrooms and the untidy children who filled them seemed to tell a different story.

In Table 1 which follows we have gathered together, according to the groups just described, some of the more important things required and offered by the several schools. The information here given was obtained from printed catalogs or by interviews with proprietors or principals of the schools. One school offers a much shorter period of instruction (one and one-half months) and another school a much lower cost of instruction (\$35) than anything indicated by the table. We are unable to include this information in the tabulation because in so doing we should reveal these schools' identity.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF WHAT IS REQUIRED AND OFFERED BY 31 SCHOOLS, MANHATTAN AND THE BRONX.

| Group | Age of Majority of Pupils | Academic Preparation of Majority of Pupils | Range of Usual Period of Instruction | Cost Range for Usual Course of Instruction | No. of Schools which Guarantee Positions |
|-------|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| I | 16-20 years | Some H. S. Ed. | 6-10 mos. | \$60-\$180 | None |
| II | 15-17 years | 8th grade | 3- 8 mos. | 55- 65 | None |
| III | 15-17 years | 8th grade | 3- 7 mos. | 45- 65 | 5 |
| IV | 15-16 years | 8th grade | 6- Indefinite | 48- 55 | 2 |
| V | | | | | |

(Information included by Groups III and IV.)

THE STUDENTS.

The usual age of students is from fifteen to seventeen years, the greater number being not older than fifteen. This means that few are old enough to have had more than a year or two of high school education; and the large majority have not passed beyond the elementary schools. Commenting upon this point one principal said, "Fifteen or twenty years ago the age of all pupils in private business schools was much more advanced, and a girl under eighteen or nineteen was an exception. But now the tendency is to take young people into an office at a much earlier age because office work has been so reduced to routine, by the introduction of efficiency methods, that young and inexperienced girls without much education can be valuable." The idea expressed in this opinion is discussed in Chapter 6. None of the schools investigated requires high school graduation for entrance; one school insists upon some high school education and makes an effort to get graduates; and all other schools, except three, require elementary graduation. More than half the thirty-one investigated schools recruit their entire enrollment from elementary school graduates immediately or soon after graduation; the remainder of schools have a mixture of pupils who have preparation ranging from eighth grade to second year high school—although, even here, the majority enrollment is of eighth grade pupils. Three schools admit the acceptance of pupils who have less than eighth grade preparation, we have said, but they claim that such pupils are a small minority.

When asked about the policy of admitting students to the school, managers and principals seemed ready to discuss the matter with unreserved frankness. Six schools asserted that they never refused admission on the ground of unfitness, provided the requirements in age and school grade were met. Only two schools claimed to give any sort of

formal entrance examination. The attitude of the few best schools is summarized in the statements of the first two principals quoted below; but the three statements that follow represent the attitude of most of the schools.

1. "Undoubtedly, many pupils choose this work wrongly, as is proved by their after-experience; but it is extremely difficult to tell this at the time they enter upon it. There are all grades of office work, and we expect to prepare pupils for any one of them; but we always take pupils on probation one month, and in the course of a year we reject a number of them."
2. "We always take pupils on trial; and, after one month, it is possible to tell whether they will be successful or not. No honest school would pretend that it could find this out at the beginning by testing pupils. If a pupil proves unable to do the work, the parents are informed of it, and the money paid in is refunded except enough to cover the expense of stationery and supplies used."
3. "We do not turn pupils away. We make what we can of them. Sometimes we can only fit them for the lowest grades of work, but, in so doing, we save them from the factory or the shop."
4. "If I don't take their money, some one else will, and perhaps I can do a better thing for them than some other school can."
5. "I do not believe in fixed requirements, I think every pupil ought to have a chance; and, by our individual system of instruction, we find out exactly what a pupil is worth. Like a business house, we take them on trial. If they cannot succeed, we tell their parents. No, not many are dropped in this way. Almost every one can do something in the business world. If they leave after a trial, of course we charge for the month. It should not be *our* risk."

The question of refunding money does not seem to the schools a serious one; for in the majority of cases advance payments are made from month to month only, so that a pupil who drops out because of inability to succeed loses no more than a month's tuition and probably less than that. The fact remains, however, that some schools which do not allow a refund offer a slight reduction for the payment of three months' tuition or more in advance. If pupils who have entered into this arrangement drop out, their loss is considerable; but, in order to avoid loss, they are likely to continue in school even though they are not profiting from the instruction.

The types of pupils who make up the enrollment of the private schools are too various for generalization; yet within the groups described above there is a degree of similarity. Thus, some idea of the types can be given by quoting briefly from the records those impressions which are typical:

The pupils were pleasing to the visitor's observation. They seemed bright, attractive young people who came, apparently, from favored homes. Many of them were mature. It is probable that they would, on the whole, be acceptable and competent in a business office. The concentration of the class was marked.—*A School of Group I.*

They were a good-looking group—clean and of at least average intelligence. They were simply, but well dressed, and appeared to represent comfortable circumstances. But many of them looked too young for wage earning.—*A School of Group II.*

The students were observed as they came from the school at dismissal. We saw a colorless stream of youngsters, sent, one would say, from financially struggling homes. There may have been a number of foreigners among them, but the effect was of a group of American-born children, with American traditions.—*A School of Group III.*

Children of fourteen, fifteen and sixteen years. While they looked bright and responsive in the casual glance allowed the visitor, the majority of them were poorly dressed and not clean, and there was something about them that seemed to betray the fact that a large portion of their lives was spent in the New York streets. Most of them appeared to be foreign born or of foreign parentage.—*A School of Group IV.*

THE TEACHING FORCE.

If the ideal preparation for a commercial teacher is a combination of academic education (high school or college), pedagogical training, technical training in the subject he is to teach, and practical experience in business, it might be hard to find many ideal teachers. Only one school of those visited claimed insistence upon normal school training. Very few schools consider experience in business a requisite qualification. A number of schools state that they employ as teachers only those who have at least a high school diploma. In the schools of Groups I and II and in some other schools, teachers who are college or university graduates may be found. In these groups and in Group III there are a few principals and teachers who have written texts; or who are prominent in associations seeking to raise the standard of commercial education. By contrast, in schools of Groups III and IV there are evidences of actual illiteracy in the managerial or teaching force. An example of this was given by the principal who said, "We can boast on our school." Managers claim that it is difficult to get good teachers. The sources commonly used are commercial agencies, the typewriter companies and lists of their own graduates. There is considerable interchange of teachers among private commercial schools, as this chapter demonstrates later; there is less interchange between public and private schools. Two of the schools visited make a specialty

of giving training to teachers. They offer, however, not pedagogy but intensive work in the subjects that are to be taught. Commercial school teachers learn, as a rule, by doing. It is in the best schools that the older, more experienced teachers are found. One large school reports that it has no teacher in its employ who has been at the school fewer than fourteen years. This, of course, is an exceptional situation. In the whole body of schools there are more young teachers than middle aged ones, and more men teachers than women.

The teachers in private commercial schools must expect night classes as well as day ones. The situation is relieved in a few schools by requiring the day teachers to be on duty the first part of the evening only and employing extra teachers to care for the latter part. One school reports that it uses the services of its day force only three nights a week and that extra teachers take charge of the other two nights. Nearly all teachers have "year 'round" engagements; however, as a rule, their afternoons after one o'clock are free in summer. The minority have Christmas or Easter vacations for the period allowed by the public schools. It has been impossible to learn much about salaries; but schools have corroborated one another in saying that \$25 a week is considered by most teachers "good pay."

COURSES OF STUDY.

Nearly all the thirty-one schools visited, except those established for specialized work, offer three courses: Stenography, Bookkeeping (also called Accounting, Business, or Commercial Course) and the "Secretarial" course. The *Stenography* course is, in a few cases, concerned with short-hand and typing only. More commonly it includes spelling, penmanship and business forms—or some other form of English teaching. In the minority of schools, it includes office practice, legal forms and filing. One school adds

mental arithmetic. The *Bookkeeping* course may be book-keeping only, with perhaps some drill in rapid calculation. More commonly, it includes banking, commercial arithmetic and penmanship. The minority of schools offer commercial law, office practice and English in connection with the Bookkeeping course. The *Secretarial* course assumes its title in some schools, no doubt, because other schools use it. No school wants to lose patrons because of the omission of this fine-sounding name. As a matter of fact, a real secretarial course preparing mature pupils of good general education for work of special responsibility, is offered in only three of these schools. The so-called "Secretarial" course is really, in most cases, a combination of the Stenography and Bookkeeping courses; and anyone admitted to the school is considered eligible to take it. Two schools give a secretarial course which might more appropriately be named "clerical assistant." This includes neither stenography nor bookkeeping, but is concerned with office practice, filing and penmanship. In any school of general character, most pupils take the combined stenographic and bookkeeping course, whether called "secretarial" or by some other name. The second largest group take the stenography course.

The thirty-one schools divide thus on the basis of courses offered:

TABLE 2: COURSES OFFERED IN 31 PRIVATE COMMERCIAL SCHOOLS OF MANHATTAN AND THE BRONX.

| Courses Offered. | No. of Schools |
|---|----------------|
| Stenography, Bookkeeping, "Secretarial" Course | 19 |
| Stenography, Bookkeeping, Typing | 1 |
| Stenography, Bookkeeping, | 4 |
| Stenography, Bookkeeping, Typing, Accounting .. | 1 |
| Stenography, "Secretarial" Course | 1 |
| Stenography, Telegraphy | 1 |
| Shorthand, Typing | 1 |
| Shorthand, Advanced Shorthand | 1 |
| Secretarial Course | 1 |
| Filing | 1 |

When one private commercial school principal was asked about the need for intensive study of bookkeeping in the general commercial course, he said sardonically, "It has the value of holding pupils five or six months longer than they would otherwise stay. For my own part, I do not wish to increase my income at unnecessary expense to my pupils. I can give them all the bookkeeping they need in a very short time—enough to understand the principles and to be able to keep simple accounts." Some of the older and more conservative schools are, conscientiously we are sure, giving a large share of attention to bookkeeping, believing in its value as mental training and in its general practical use. It is safe to say, however, that in the majority of schools bookkeeping is learned from a long drawn out text which carries the student, self-taught, practically, from point to point; and that it is a time-consuming, complicated matter of difficult details. The somewhat common practice of supplying text books free to students seems to work out badly in connection with the teaching of bookkeeping. In order to save itself expense, a school may be using antiquated texts, which cost at least one-third less than the current editions and are poorly adapted to the changes in the bookkeeping of modern business. If the purchase of books were the pupil's expense, a school would not be tempted to use any but the best and newest publications.

We have the statements of twenty-seven school principals relative to the teaching of English in stenography courses. The statements may be summarized thus:

TABLE 3: KIND OF ENGLISH INSTRUCTION IN 27 SCHOOLS OF
MANHATTAN AND THE BRONX:

| Instruction | No. of Schools |
|---|----------------|
| General instruction in English composition to all pupils | 11 |
| General instruction in English composition to any pupils who are not high school graduates.. | 1 |
| Instruction in the writing of business forms. (Given in two schools through the medium of occasional lectures)..... | 8 |
| No claim to any English instruction. (Separate academic preparatory classes in three schools wherein pupils may receive English instruction if they desire. This given at extra cost, except in one school.)..... | 7 |

The schools which confine their English instruction to "business forms" are, unfortunately, those with an enrollment made up chiefly of children whose education is eighth grade or less, and whose need of drill in English structure and composition is urgent. One principal describes the course in business forms thus:

"The students learn how a business man expresses himself in a letter. They are given an exercise in writing a dunning letter to meet several conditions, such as a debtor's inability, unwillingness or negligence to pay; also special circumstances, such as a mistake in a bill, which prevent immediate settlement. We grant that the teaching is not for the purpose of providing English instruction in composition, punctuation, etc., but to impress upon students the form of a letter, the beginning and ending, and the ideas it means to convey."

From the whole description of the English work in this school, we should conclude that it amounts to nothing as education in essentials. Furthermore, judging from the business letters referred to in Chapter 3, which 428 business-trained young people wrote as a test for this investi-

gation, it would appear that the most obvious result of such instruction is to give an impression to students that the ideals in business correspondence are the omission of all first person pronouns and the lavish use of abbreviations for almost any sort of word.

INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION.

The "individual instruction" commonly advertised by private commercial schools is a method of teaching which—good or bad—is enforced upon the majority of them. It is the only method adaptable to a group of students uneven in their attainments and capacity. It is true that the greater number of New York City schools show homogeneity in the general character of their students, the age being fifteen or sixteen and the preparation, as a rule, eighth grade; but these students do not enter or leave together. With the exception of the best schools, registration, dropping out and graduation go on all through the year. There are, as a rule, no set dates for beginning and ending. Under such conditions strict grading is impossible and students must have their lessons assigned and explained individually or in very small groups. Class work, which is so rarely possible, has the advantage of general discussion; it gives to students the chance to profit by each others' mistakes and to teachers an opportunity to find out what the students do not know or understand. In the poorer schools, where individual instruction is the only kind given, students may drift along in a vague, unintelligent way. They have little or no home work; and the written work done in class does not, students say, receive a teacher's careful correction. In the shorthand and typing work, however, there is a definite standard by which a student can measure himself at any time. That is his "speed"; and when he can achieve a given number of words a minute he is a "finished" person ready to be offered to business. The best schools offer a combina-

tion of individual instruction and class work. They are able to do this because the longer course they give makes for uniformity in beginning and ending, and only one shift of students can be completely prepared in the space of one year. The size of classes varies with the size of the school. The maximum number found in one class was seventy-five; a more usual number was forty.

PERIOD AND COST OF INSTRUCTION.

The period of instruction, as shown previously, ranges from one and one-half months to a year. In nearly all schools the course of study is of indeterminate length. Several advertise three months or less; a few expect to keep pupils from nine months to a year; **for the majority of schools the expected time is six months.**

The cost of a course in which stenography and bookkeeping are taught varies from \$35 to \$180, according to the school one chooses. **The majority of schools charge ten dollars a month, and expect payments to be made in advance monthly.** Payment in advance, of the whole cost of tuition or a considerable part of it, is rewarded usually with a slight reduction in cost. That some schools do not have a fixed price for a course but adapt the amount to what the student can or will pay, was indicated in the statements here quoted. They are taken from the records of interviews with girls who attended schools of Group IV.

“One of the curious things at this school was the way they charged. Everyone paid different tuition fees. It depended on how much they knew about how to make a bargain. I paid \$65, another girl paid \$40 and another \$75, etc. That struck me funny—like a fish counter!”

“Some paid \$50 or \$55, some \$60, some \$75. He charged according to family conditions. It was the poor people who only paid \$50 and the rich ones \$75. Why not?”

Most of the schools in Groups I and II require students to purchase text books; in most of those in Groups III and IV text books are loaned by the school, free of charge. We have already referred to this in our discussion of the teaching of bookkeeping.

EQUIPMENT.

Typical equipment for instruction in the majority of schools consists of ordinary school desks with typewriters of various manufacture. One school of the thirty-one visited, provides its pupils with office desks and cabinet typewriters. In some schools the number of typewriters is not adequate to the number of pupils; in some the variety of typewriters is insufficient; and in others there is such lack of room that pupils are required to study or even recite in typewriting rooms while the typewriters are in use. In three schools the traditional cages, simulating the banking offices of business, were found in use as a method of teaching bookkeeping. Office practice equipment is somewhat meagre except in one school which specializes in it. Most schools have none; seven have small filing cabinets for the pupil's instruction; and a smaller number have duplicators, comptometers, adding and dictating machines or other office devices. Not all schools have adequate blackboard space. So far as we were able to learn, three schools make some effort to maintain a commercial library and two have a lantern for lecture purposes. In spite of the fact that the equipment, generally, is limited, it can be said that there is likely to be an air of business and system even where the actual tools and furniture of business are lacking; and that for teaching the specific subjects of stenography and bookkeeping, without allied subjects or practice in general office routine, the equipment in most schools is of fair adequacy. But we believe that for a complete commercial course, worthy of the name, the majority of schools are under-equipped. The condition of classrooms and the nature of the buildings which house the schools are set forth in Table 4 which follows:

TABLE 4: PHYSICAL CONDITIONS IN 31 SCHOOLS OF MANHATTAN AND THE BRONX.

| | | Type of Building | Appearance of Class Room | Light | Ventilation | Cleanliness |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|---|--|-------------|
| Group I (6 schools) | Remodelled club-house. | All schools of this group have ample space and give an impression of dignity, suitability and general attractiveness. One school achieves beauty as well as practicality. | Good. One school so planned in all rooms that light comes from back and left. | Good. | Good. | Good. |
| | Remodelled residence. Office building. Bank building. Newspaper building. Over store. Over moving picture theatre. | For the most part, well kept and well furnished in a plain, sensible way. Several have fine, large rooms with high ceilings. One school is particularly well adapted and equipped. | Good in every school except one and this school has adequate daylight in some of its rooms. | Adequate in every school except one. | All schools clean. One school somewhat untidy. | |
| Group II (9 schools) | Modern office building. Old office building. Newspaper building. Over store. | Two schools are spacious. One school is crowded, and one has objectionably narrow stairs and hall. Most are simple, inexpensive, business-like and modern, and have a minimum amount of equipment. | Good in four schools. Insufficient in two schools and poorly arranged in one school. | Excellent in one school. Adequate in five schools. Insufficient in two schools. | Six schools clean. Two schools fairly clean. | |
| | Remodelled club-house. Remodelled residence. Over moving picture theatre. | Class-rooms are dingy and neglected looking, although the reception office may be presentable. Stairways dirty in all and in two schools too narrow. | Two schools dark. Light good in one school and fair in the other. | Insufficient in all. Two schools are practically unventilated in some of their rooms. | No schools of this group are clean. Class rooms and stairs especially dirty. | |
| Group IV (4 schools) | Remodelled residence. Old office building. Modern office building. | One school crowded in small rooms. Others have adequate space. | Adequate in three schools. Fair in one school. | Adequate. | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Group V (4 schools) | | | | | | |

FINDING POSITIONS FOR STUDENTS.

We have already shown in Table 1 the standing of the groups with regard to guaranteed positions. It is our opinion that an honest school cannot guarantee positions. It can say that it places 95 per cent of its pupils; that there is great likelihood of placement; or that it has more positions than workers. But when a new and unknown student presents himself to the school for admission, it is not possible to say that he will be able to complete the course satisfactorily or that a position satisfactory to him can be found. Some schools qualify their promise by saying, "We get *some kind* of a position. Every one can do something." But this is not sufficient; for the boy or girl who studies stenography expects to be placed in stenography, and he is not getting what he was promised if given a position in which stenography is not used. The school which guarantees a position "if you study according to our directions" leaves a loophole for literal truth but does not, in our opinion, succeed in giving the impression that it is a reliable school.

The placement services of most schools are given to graduates only, yet there are schools which will help to place non-graduates if their leaving school was based on a justifiable reason. All the schools visited, with one exception, feel that the responsibility is upon them to find their graduates' first positions, although they do not always succeed in so doing. One manager, in order to show his zealous helpfulness and not thinking that the undesirability of his pupil might reflect upon the school, told us he had sent a girl to twenty-five positions before she was finally accepted. Schools differ with regard to the policy of continuing placement services after graduation. Most schools assert that they have no difficulty in getting numerous calls from employers. This is especially claimed by those schools which are located in the heart of business districts. Schools

long established claim a clientele built up through years of service. The typewriter agencies seem to be utilized by the majority of schools to some extent; and one school, at least, depends upon them for all its position finding.

The question of investigation of places of employment was met with various answers. The most usual were, "Most of our employers have been known to us for years"; "We never send pupils to an unknown firm whose name is not in the telephone book"; and "You can judge by the way a man talks over the telephone whether you want to send anybody." One school said it does not accept calls for girls in apartment houses, theatres or hotels; some schools judge by the location of a business house whether it is to be considered desirable; several base acceptance of calls upon the firm's willingness to pay a wage not lower than the minimum set by the school. In working up the patronage of employers, some schools have developed a circularizing list on the basis of financial rating. One school, large and well established, has for years kept systematic notes of the occupational experience of its graduates and can tell by referring to these which employers are desirable and which are not. Only one school was found which disclaims any rule or method in regard to getting knowledge of its places of employment. We were told, in some instances, that it was a school's custom, in the case of unknown employers, to send two girls together to make application, to send a teacher with a pupil or to advise pupils to take their parents with them. We have no way of knowing the extent to which these various claims are made good; but our feeling about the situation as a whole is that in the case of new employers, at least, students have no reliable protection against placements that may prove undesirable or even unsafe. One school manager said, not without truth, "No school by any method can be sure of protecting young girls in their wage earning experience.

The most important factor in safety is that girls should be taught to take care of themselves."

Eighteen schools claim a minimum wage which they adhere to in placement. Of course, we understand that most pupils are expected to go above the minimum, yet it **seems to us incredible that any schools should accept for trained graduates the minimum wage which the majority of eighteen schools acknowledge.** Table 5 shows what these wages are:

TABLE 5: MINIMUM WAGES REQUIRED FOR GRADUATES AT 18 SCHOOLS OF MANHATTAN AND THE BRONX.

| Weekly Minimum Wage. | Number of Schools. |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| \$5.00 | 3 |
| 6.00 | 4 |
| 6.00 and chance to advance..... | 1 |
| 7.00 | 4 |
| 8.00 | 4 |
| 10.00 | 1 |
| 12.00 | 1 |

THE SPIRIT OF RIVALRY.

Competition is a matter of serious concern to most private commercial schools. It is a kind of competition that is not so likely to be the life of the commercial education trade as it is to be its death or disabling. It is very hard for new or small schools to keep from "going to the wall"; and especially among schools of Group IV the effect of competition is, too often, to concentrate all the energy and ingenuity upon methods of outwitting a rival, instead of using this energy and ingenuity in building up a better school and thus winning fairly by offering to students a better thing for their money. Such competition as exists between private and public schools is referred to in Chapter 4; but the hottest rivalry is to be found in the relations of the private schools with each other. This is to be expected because it is the private schools, only, which offer similar

subjects within a somewhat similar time range. The public school curriculum is widely different from that of the private school and the time required is much longer. Schools have their chosen or inevitable rivals. For example, School A, Group III, is the active rival of School B of Group II and vice versa. School C, Group IV, concentrates its energies largely upon School D of the same group; but School C is so much the smaller institution that D does not reciprocate actively. Rivals are fought with all disregard of truth and fairness. Tales of rivals' misdoings were recounted to us enthusiastically in the course of the investigation. An incident which occasioned some unpleasant publicity for a New York private commercial school a number of years ago is talked of as if it had happened yesterday; and yet the thing which occurred was an accident which might, with equal chance, have befallen almost any school in the city. To illustrate methods used in competition, we cite the case of a school which obtained the names of its rival's enrolled students and sent them communications offering to secure positions for them. We have seen evidence, which to us is conclusive, that last summer this same school sent, to the students of its rival, post cards which read, "*Do not come to school. Infantile paralysis.*" and signed them with the typewritten name of the rival's school-manager.

Among the most actively competitive schools, there is considerable interchanging of ownership. It appears to be the policy of the large schools to "buy out" promising new schools which encroach upon their territory; or to close them by inducing the proprietor-manager to accept, in their own school, a teacher's or solicitor's position. In the case of established rivals, attempts are made on both sides to secure each other's teachers. In this way one school learns another's assailable points most intimately and does not scruple to attack them. The following story, taken from the records, is an illustration:

For a few years Mr. E. had a school of his own with an enrollment approximating one hundred students. Suddenly he closed his school, telling his students that he was to become a teacher in the F school and recommending that they go to this school to complete their courses. He did all this notwithstanding the fact that a few weeks before in an assembly talk before the students he had told them how "low" the F. school, then his rival, was. For several months he continued to teach in the F school; but suddenly he left, without warning—students say—and became the G school's employee. The G school is the deadliest rival the F school has. Our investigation led us to the G school very soon after Mr. E had come to it; and he occupied most of the time of our interview in revealing to us the inefficiency and irregularities of the F school which had so lately employed him.

SUDDEN CLOSING.

"Going out of business" is common enough, in the case of New York's schools of commercial training, to warrant careful watching whether the closing be the result of competition, under-capitalization or deliberate unscrupulousness. The investigation has learned of three schools which closed suddenly during the last year. The first of these is the school referred to in the record quoted above. Further information in regard to this school's money methods is stated in the paragraphs which follow, and the stories of the two other schools are told:

The E School

"It was always Mr. E's custom," students said, "to keep everyone paid up right to the very minute. If you hadn't paid you couldn't come in class. When the school closed there were about one hundred girls there and some were cheated out of months of schooling and a good deal of money. The day before the school failed Mr. E went around to the pupils and collected money."

The H School

This was a school which we planned to visit because we understood its enrollment was fairly large. On entering the elevator in the building in which it was located, we were told by the elevator man that the school had not been open for several days and that the managers had left over night taking all books and school supplies with them, except the typewriters. No one, the man said, neither landlord nor pupils, knew that the managers intended leaving or where they had gone. Pupils had come to the school, as usual, only to find the door locked; and that is all anyone knew. Later some interviews held with girls who had been students before or at the time of closing, gave some information in regard to the general character of the school and the circumstances of its closing.

Julia L. is a recent graduate and Louisa M. was a student at the H School when it closed. Each girl said she had paid \$35 for the course which was to last from four to six months. They agreed in saying, "If you don't get through in four months you get through anyhow." One expanded this remark by saying she knew she was not progressing very rapidly in shorthand and at the end of the fourth month was still in need of fundamental training. When she took the final test at this time her astonishment was great to be told that she had passed and was ready for work. "If you insist on more training after the four months are over," she said, "you are charged \$10 a month aside from what you paid, although when you paid it you thought you could stay until you were efficient." The school was untidy, the girls said, and the manager also. Although the school advertised a course which included filing, office practice, legal documents and mimeographing, they were taught nothing but bookkeeping and stenography. Both girls came to the conclusion long before the school closed that Mr. H, the proprietor, was a "crook." For example, students were expected to

buy their stationery from him; and often he would take the money and say, "I will give you the change later"—but he never did give it to them, according to the girls' report.

In speaking of the closing of the school Louisa M. said, "No one knew just what was going to happen. We girls saw Mr. H picking up books and putting things away in the office and a rumor spread that the school was going to close. The first of July he put a notice on the board saying the school was closed for a few days and the students would be notified what day to come back." She received a post card soon asking her to return July 5th. She did return but found the door locked. She received another card asking her to return on August 17th. She went back again but found the school still closed. A third card told her to go in September and when she went the elevator man told her, "There is no more H school. Mr. H has skipped."

Another girl who said she had paid \$30 and had received only one month's instruction when the school closed, corroborated in detail the events noted in the foregoing record. She said she did not get any of her money back and thought about fifteen students suffered a loss similar to hers.

The I School

One of the schools which was most active in the solicitation of eighth grade graduates last June, was a new school which frankly told the children it was new when urging their patronage. Our call at its address found the door locked, but through the windows rows of dust-covered typewriters could be seen, and the stamp of desertion was upon the whole place. Later we encountered the proprietor, at this time a teacher in a large, well established neighboring school. He said he had "gone bankrupt" and assured us that the few pupils he had enrolled had been taken with him to the school which at the time of our visit employed him.

THE MORTALITY OF SCHOOLS.

Whether or not it is customary for private commercial schools in New York City to come into existence, to have a short life and then to pass out, is information that cannot very well be provided unless, perhaps, by an old resident who has been continuously close to the commercial school situation. **The more transient schools might not stay long enough to get recorded on any available list.** From Trow's Directory we offer the following names of schools which were listed in 1906 and 1911, but which do not appear in the present issue of 1916-1917. We know, in the case of four of these schools, that they exist now under new names or have been taken over by rival schools. Such changes and combinations may have befallen others. But, at any rate, the list, covering a period of ten years, includes twenty-two names; and this number of vanished schools is large enough to induce the opinion that, in spite of the longevity of certain schools, there is instability in the business of private commercial instruction.

TABLE 6: SCHOOLS EXISTING FIVE TO TEN YEARS AGO; NOT LISTED NOW (1916-1917). (FROM TROW'S BUSINESS DIRECTORY.)

1906—Bond Institute of Mercantile Training
Broadway Business College
Commercial Training College
Cosmopolitan School of Shorthand
Franklin School
Goodwin Bookkeeping Institute
Hope's School
Metropolitan School of Business
Standard School of Commerce

1906-1911—

Blake's School
Harlem Commercial School
Loesberg's
Metropolitan School of Shorthand
Ruscoe School of Commerce

1911—Abbott's School

Mulcaster's School
The Pitcher School
Sharp School
Thompson's Business School
Universal Business Institute
Vidal Typewriting School
Yorkville School

THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE COMMERCIAL SCHOOLS TO EXIST.

The private commercial schools claim, with truth, that they are the discoverers and pioneers in their field. The oldest private commercial school in New York City was established sixty-seven years ago; but the oldest public commercial course has yet to celebrate its thirtieth birthday. The private schools believe it would be a reversal of justice if, now, the public should question their right to exist. They think the work of commercial instruction is still experimental and will always be, because the conditions in business organization and methods are continually undergoing change. They have advanced the opinion, also, that private commercial schools are needed for the reason that justifies the existence of private schools of any sort—their ability to meet special, individual needs. A number of private commercial school managers, in our interviews during the course of this investigation, discussed various aspects of the rights of private schools. Most of their comment seemed wholly sincere; in a few instances it seemed that the managers sought arguments to justify an object which had in reality no aim beyond that of an opportunist's business enterprise. There is obviously a fear among some of them that the public school will wake up to the demand and become a competitor in the field of the short intensive business course. We quote here some of the things these managers said:

Mr. S.

"The first need is for a concentrated short business course, for those who cannot afford to remain a longer time in school. The public school, in not offering this, leaves a legitimate field to the private school.

"There are some children who do not get along in the public school, which is planned for average children. These may be over-sized, may be retarded

slightly in mental capacity, or may, for other reasons as individuals, be unadapted to the regulation arrangements of the public school system.

"A private school may be able to give better business training; and, if people have money to spend on education, there is no reason why they should not be free to patronize private commercial schools if anything is to be gained thereby."

Mr. M.

"I have heard that in some public schools talks are given to pupils telling them not to have anything to do with any private commercial school. If this is true it is too undiscriminating to be just, since we private schools gave commercial instruction when the public schools were scorning it; and, furthermore, we provide a means for studying technical subjects with all time waste eliminated—a thing which the public schools do not do."

Mr. H.

"The public school does not and should not offer the short business course which most private schools give. The public school does right in keeping to ideals in education. The private school must exist for the minority who cannot follow the ideal. If short courses were given in public schools, fitting pupils in a few months to go into business positions, it would be much less possible than it is now to hold pupils in high school for a longer course."

Mr. E.

"Frequently I receive teachers from the public schools as visitors, give them information about methods and show them my equipment; and my only reward is that I hear that pupils in public schools are warned wholesale against attending private commercial schools. The fact is that the function of the private school is more important now than it was twenty-five years ago, in spite of the growing activities of the public schools in the direction of commercial instruction."

Mr. A.

"In my opinion, the private school should be supplemented gradually by public school efforts. This will be done as soon as the public school has learned to do the job in such a way as to provide speed and practical experience. High school teachers are too academic at present."

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. Private commercial schools as a group are receiving too many—and the public schools too few—of the city's younger candidates for commercial instruction. Some private commercial schools are receiving persons who are not fit for any sort of commercial instruction.
2. The pupils in most private commercial schools are too young and too unprepared to profit adequately by the kind of instruction given.
3. The usual private commercial school course is, for the youngest pupils, too short to be thorough.
4. The quality of instruction in stenography and book-keeping is likely to be acceptable for those pupils capable of receiving it; but, in most schools, pupils cannot get adequate instruction in office practice or a background of knowledge about business. The schools which do not give special English instruction are those whose pupils are most likely to need it.
5. Individual instruction, without the aid of classroom recitation, is enforced on the pupils of most schools because there is no uniform time for entering upon and finishing the courses of study.
6. The quality of the teachers in a number of private commercial schools is of lower grade than should be accepted for educators of any kind. There is need for a standard of minimum qualifications which all schools are compelled to recognize.

7. Placement facilities in private commercial schools do not cover investigation of places of employment, and this is unfortunate since so large a proportion of graduates are children of sixteen years or younger.
8. Schools which resort to unscrupulous methods of competition show, in this, their unfitness to exist as educational institutions.
9. Students are in need of protection against the sudden closing of schools, due to undercapitalization or other mismanagement.

CHAPTER 3.

THE PRODUCT OF THE SCHOOLS.

Stenographic training is being given to pupils whose knowledge of English construction and spelling is of a low grade of inferiority.

Many pupils who enter upon private commercial school courses drop out before graduation.

Of 1,641 positions, held by workers who had had private commercial school training, 23% could probably have been held without that training.

Of 1,281 positions, held by workers trained in private commercial schools, 54% were retained less than six months.

In the majority of positions, held by 1,035 workers, trained in private commercial schools, salaries fell between the limits of \$6 and \$8.

The ultimate test of a school is not what that school can show in equipment nor what can be said of the policy or course of instruction. It is what the graduates can do when they get into the field of business; and, also, it is the quality of the discrimination exercised by the school in the selection and retention of students. In our endeavor to learn the fate of private commercial school students, we have made use of those employment agencies which keep the most complete and reliable records, and which were willing to lend their co-operation to promote this investigation. These were:

Chapter 3 is based upon the following data:

Records showing the occupational experiences of 1035 young people trained in private commercial schools. Information for 1641 positions shows how long they were held, how they were secured and why they were left; shows also the business in which they were held, the kind of work, and the wages.

185 records of trained office workers rejected by an employment bureau because of unfitness. These cover rejections made in a period of 2 years.

428 English composition and penmanship tests, given to trained office workers registered at employment and other agencies.

Home visits and office interviews with 20 workers who were trained at a private commercial school which was believed to be of average competency. Interviews with 31 employers—of workers trained in this school. All interviews recorded in detail.

State Public Employment Bureau
City Public Employment Bureau
Alliance Employment Bureau
Federated Employment Bureau for Jewish Girls
Commercial Extension Rooms
Vacation War Relief Employment Bureau
Young Women's Christian Association
Young Women's Hebrew Association

It is probable that the sources available do not show the best product of the schools represented. Furthermore, it should be noted, in connection with the tabulations and illustrations which follow, that some of those private schools which we believe to be the best are represented by few records or none. We do not assert that all private schools turn out students of the kind this chapter describes, or imply that such students make up the entire enrollment of any school. But the sources used may be trusted to show what happens annually in New York City to some hundreds of boys and girls; and if, annually, some hundreds of young people are making an investment in private commercial school training which yields only discouragement, frequent job seeking, or work they could do without training, this must be a matter for public concern and action.

LEAVING BEFORE GRADUATION.

We do not know definitely how large a proportion of the students included in the records are graduates of the schools they attended; but this report should be concerned with them whether they are graduates or not. The private schools, in taking money, have a degree of responsibility for *unsuccessful non-graduates*, which the public schools do not bear. It is evident that the proportion of non-graduate

private commercial school students in New York City is large; and, further, that the chief reasons for their dropping out before graduation are these:

1. Discouragement because of their inability to comprehend the course of study.
2. Discouragement when it becomes realized that, because they have not normal ability or preparation, they will not be able to complete the course in the specified time. Continuance would mean additional cost, and they may not be ready to meet unplanned-for expense.

A school which allows incapable or insufficiently prepared students to continue beyond the first trial weeks must carry a large share of blame. Any student who has remained in a school long enough to reach the point at which he will offer himself as a candidate for stenographic work, has made in the school a considerable investment of time and money; and this must be remembered against a school when, in the case of its unsuccessfully trained students, it disclaims all responsibility if they have left before graduation. The lack of success to which we refer here is that based upon a worker's immaturity, his unsuitable appearance, his lack of intelligence and his deficiency in the correct writing and speaking of English. We do not refer to the smaller group of office workers whose faults are not more fundamental than the need for a little more practice in shorthand or a little more speed in typing. Such workers have sometimes left school before they should leave, because a position was offered; and, in these instances, their unpreparedness cannot be charged to the school.

THE FATE OF 1035 TRAINED WORKERS.

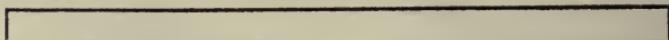
We have included in our study only young people under twenty-one years of age who have received commercial training in Manhattan or the Bronx, and who left their schools

not longer ago than 1913. Our records of students trained at private commercial schools are 1035 in number. They are not selected in any way, but represent all office work applicants at the several bureaus within a given period. These records are more or less complete occupational histories from the time of leaving school to the date of the last application for work. It may be reasonable to consider in the tabulations and diagrams that follow that applicants for employment will not be likely, at any rate, to leave out of their records the facts that are most to their credit. The histories cover such information as the kinds of positions held, the means by which they were secured, and the reasons why they were left; the period for which positions were held and the wages received in them. Of the whole number, nearly all are records of girls. The large majority of students represented are elementary school graduates; a few left elementary school before graduation; several had a year or two at high school; and an occasional student is a high school graduate.

For the 1035 students we have information concerning 1641 positions held by them after leaving commercial schools. In Diagram I which follows, it is shown that 369 positions, 23 per cent of the whole number, give no evidence of using the stenography, typing or bookkeeping which compose the ordinary private commercial school course. In other words, 23 per cent are positions which probably could have been held without the investment of time and money in special, private commercial instruction.

DIAGRAM I.

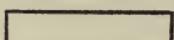
Stenography 46.9



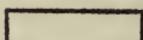
Clerical 18.4



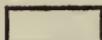
Book-keeping 12.5



Typing 9.3



Stenography
and
Book-keeping 7.4



Other 5.5

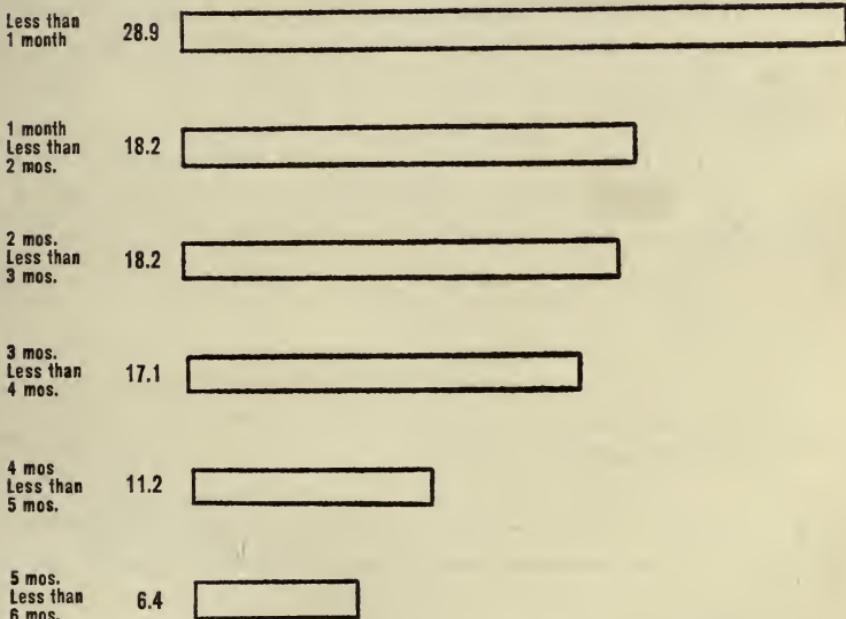


Analysis of 1641 office positions with regard to their dependency upon special training in stenography or bookkeeping. Shaded portion represents positions which do not need it. The positions were held by 1035 commercially trained workers.

The amount of changing about in office positions cannot be shown by contrasting the number of positions with the number of workers; for the total of positions recorded does not include all the positions held. One bureau, which contributed 361 of the records, noted the workers' two last positions only. Several bureaus make a practice of summarizing positions of short duration by entering a statement with dates such as, "Several temporary positions held." It is probable, too, that certain of the remaining records failed of completeness. Either this is true, or we have to believe that long periods of idleness occurred between positions; for, in the case of a number of workers who are recorded as having left school so long ago as two years, the sum of the periods of employment shows a total of less than one year. The facts regarding changes can be set forth more

accurately by stating how long the recorded positions were held. A tabulation for 1281 positions shows that 697, or more than half; were held less than six months; 257, or about one-fifth, from six months to a year; and only 327, or about one-fourth, one year or longer. The positions held less than six months are analyzed in Diagram II. It should be noted that more than a fourth of these 697 were held for a period of less than one month.

DIAGRAM II.



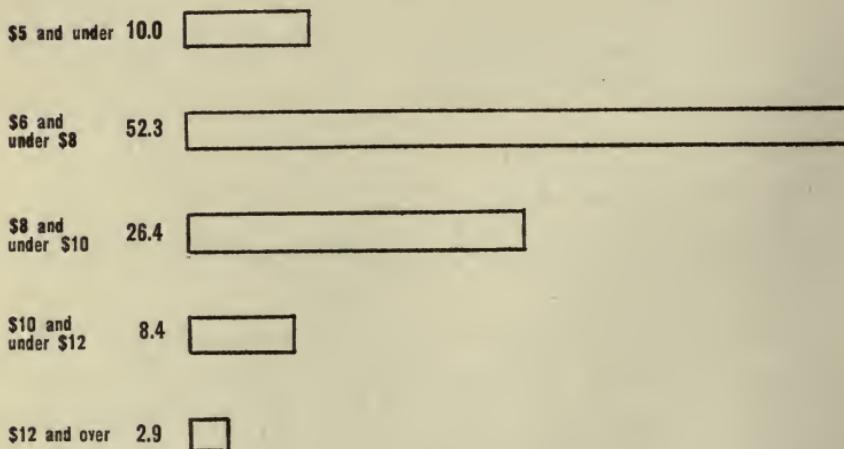
Analysis of 697 office positions, held by commercially trained office workers, for less than 6 months. Shows periods for which they were held.

Frank and full statements of the reasons why positions were left may not be given readily by candidates for employment. In the case of forty-six per cent of the tabulated reasons, the claim is made that the worker was "not needed" because business was "slack," or that the position was in-

tended to be temporary only. Three per cent admitted the workers' incapacity. In only eleven per cent was a claim made to the commendable excuse that positions were left for the sake of advancement. Other reasons also were assigned. Stated in the order of their frequency of occurrence, these are: unsatisfactory working conditions; the failure of a firm or its removal from the city; sickness or other emergency.

Wage information could be tabulated for 1357 office positions. Of these 697 were held by persons who had been wage earning one year or less. When, for a given position, wages at beginning and leaving were both stated on the record, we have tabulated only the higher wage received at the time of leaving. The minimum recorded wage is \$3.50 and the maximum is \$18. Diagram III makes it clear that the majority of positions come between the limits of six and eight dollars. Seventy-six per cent fall below nine dollars.

DIAGRAM III.



Showing wages in 1357 positions held by commercially trained workers.

SOME INDIVIDUAL STORIES.

The workers' individual stories are not sufficiently revealed in group tabulations. Close examination of the records shows that stenographic and bookkeeping positions were likely to be the first ones held on leaving school, and that the change to typing, clerical, factory or other work followed. In some cases the typing, clerical, factory or other work appears to be the final level; in others, work of this sort was done at intervals between stenographic or bookkeeping positions. We have to infer either that the supply of candidates for stenographic and bookkeeping positions was in excess of the demand; or that the workers in question were incapable of doing good enough work to retain such positions and, in some cases, to even secure them. While there are many records which show instances of good wages, the records are few which show for the individual any sort of consistent progression either in wages or kind of work. We shall illustrate these points by a reproduction here of some of the records. Each of them is typical of many others, with the exception of the last two records given.

Alice B.—This is the record of a girl who has in all her positions made use of her training; but she is continually losing positions. The wages fluctuate a little, never getting beyond those received in her first position and usually falling below. This girl was graduated from elementary school, attended a private commercial school seven months and began wage earning at sixteen years of age.

| | Positions | Weekly Wage | Duration of Employment |
|-----|---------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| 1st | Stenography..... | \$8.00 | 10 months |
| 2nd | Typing..... | 7.00 | 3 months |
| 3rd | Typing..... | 8.00 | 1 day |
| 4th | Typing..... | 6.00 | 2 days |
| 5th | Typing..... | 7.00 | 5 days |
| 6th | Stenography..... | 7.00 | 2 weeks |
| 7th | Stenography..... | 6.00 | 2 weeks |
| 8th | Stenography and book- keeping..... | 6.00 | 2 weeks |
| 9th | Stenography..... | 7.00 | 2 months+ |

Mary K.—This record is similar to the foregoing. The difference lies in the fact that the girl represented has not been so long away from school; but her story indicates that the same sort of future awaits her.

| Positions | Weekly Wage | Duration of Employment |
|----------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| 1st Stenography..... | \$6.00 | 1 week |
| 2nd Stenography..... | 7.00 | 2 weeks |
| 3rd Stenography..... | 8.00 | 2 weeks |
| 4th Stenography..... | 6.00 | 1 week |

Rose L.—An instance of retrogression from stenographic to clerical work. The girl represented was graduated from elementary school, attended a private commercial school seven months and began wage earning at sixteen years.

| Positions | Weekly Wage | Duration of Employment |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| 1st Stenography..... | \$6.00 | 1 week |
| 2nd Stamping..... | 5.50 | 2 weeks |
| 3rd Clerical work..... | 6.00 | 3 weeks |
| 4th General office work..... | 6.00 | Not ascertained |

Louise K.—This record shows a girl who has managed to get office positions of some sort, but none which make use of her special stenographic training. She was graduated from elementary school, attended a private commercial school one year and began wage earning at sixteen years.

| Positions | Weekly Wage | Duration of Employment |
|------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| 1st Clerical work..... | \$7.00 | 3 months |
| 2nd Filing..... | 6.00 | 1 year |
| 3rd Clerical work..... | 6.50 | 1 year |

Celia L.—An instance of retrogression through stenographic, store, clerical and factory work. This girl attended high school for a year and then went to a private commercial school for a period long enough to make her a candidate for stenographic work. She began wage earning at sixteen years.

| Positions | Weekly Wage | Duration of Employment |
|-----------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| 1st Stenography..... | \$5.00 | 7 months |
| 2nd Selling..... | 3.00 and board | 8 months |
| 3rd Clerical work..... | 3.75 | 1 week |
| 4th Packing (factory)..... | 5.00 | 2 weeks |
| 5th Clasping (factory)..... | 5.50 | 10 days |

Fannie B.—The record of a girl who did not obtain the kind of position for which she was trained but alternated between clerical and factory work. She was graduated from elementary school, attended a private commercial school nine months, and began wage earning at sixteen years.

| Positions | Weekly Wage | Duration of Employment |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| 1st Office work..... | \$5.00 | 1 year 6 months |
| 2nd Charge clerk | 6.00 | 1 year 4 months |
| 3rd Factory work | 6.00 | 9 months |
| 4th Clerical work | 6.00 | Not ascertained |

Esther A.—The record of a girl who has had no sort of office work since leaving business school. She was graduated from elementary school and attended a private commercial school six months, taking the bookkeeping and typing course. She began wage earning at seventeen years.

| Positions | Weekly Wage | Duration of Employment |
|-----------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| 1st Slipping (factory)..... | \$4.00 | 1 month |
| 2nd Boxing (factory)..... | 6.00 | 4 months+ |

Ada S.—This record shows ten positions held in twenty months, nine of them in ten months. The girl represented was graduated from elementary school, attended a private commercial school one year, and began wage earning at fifteen years.

| | Positions | Weekly Wage | Duration of Employment |
|------|--|-------------|------------------------|
| 1st | Office work..... | \$4.00 | 2 months |
| 2nd | Stenography | 8.00 | 1 week |
| 3rd | Typing | 7.00 | 1 week |
| 4th | Stencil operating..... | 5.00 | 1 month |
| 5th | Stenography and book- keeping | 6.00 | 4 months |
| 6th | Typing | 7.00 | 10 months |
| 7th | Stenography and book- keeping | 9.00 | 3 weeks |
| 8th | Typing | 8.00 | 1 week |
| 9th | Stenography | 7.00 | 1 month |
| 10th | Bookkeeping | 8.00 | Not ascertained |

ENGLISH TESTS FOR TRAINED WORKERS.

One of the employment bureaus has made use of a test for discovering which candidates for office work possess at least the minimum of education which office positions require. A few simple examples in arithmetic, a question or two in geography relating to the location of certain prominent cities and the request that the applicant write a short business letter, constitute the chief requirements which the applicant's "specimen" must include. In two years 185 commercially trained applicants were refused registration for stenographic work on the basis of this test; and yet this bureau, in its desire to give help to those who especially need it, accepts for placement persons of very moderate abilities, some of whom cannot command salaries of more than six or seven dollars. It must be understood that to be bad enough for rejection is to be very bad indeed. The reasons for the rejections are classified thus:

| | |
|--|-----|
| Specimen poor..... | 149 |
| Applicant too young..... | 20 |
| Applicant's appearance and personality unsuitable. | 8 |
| Applicant not worth wage asked..... | 8 |

For our own understanding of the English preparation of the sort of stenographers who apply to the large non-commercial employment bureaus, we devised a test which was taken by 428 commercially trained persons under twenty-one years of age. These 428 were all who applied for stenographic positions in the selected bureaus during the period of test. Of the persons who took the test a few are high school graduates, about a third have had some high school education and the remainder are the product of elementary schools. All, we have said, had had special commercial training. The requirements of the test were the writing of an ordinary letter of application and a brief statement upon an assigned subject. It should be noted that the letter of application served not only as a test of the applicant's ability to write one, but it was designed also to supply needed facts about his schooling, training and experience. The requests were worded as follows:

Write a dated letter to Mr. John Wilson of the firm Brown and Wilson at 549 Broadway in this city, applying for the position of stenographer. Tell him your age; how much elementary or high school education you have had; where you went to business school and how long you went there; how much experience you have had and what kind it was. Tell him what salary you would accept at the start. Sign your name and address.

Write a paragraph stating your opinion concerning the value of high school education in the equipment of a stenographer and give your reasons for this opinion.

The whole number of tests taken was 428; and of these only 70 were free from errors in English or spelling. Many persons showed no sense of arrangement and their penmanship was poor; few knew how to write numerals correctly; several applied for a position "in" a firm or used the expression "in regards to." Some considered that the inclusion of an expression in parentheses was equivalent to striking it out. Careless omissions and blots or untidy erasures were

common. Parentheses were used unnecessarily, apostrophes were put in the wrong place or omitted, and periods followed questions. Abbreviations were used freely and for almost any kind of word. Instances of misspelling were found in most of the tests. The following short lists of typical mistakes may serve to give some idea of the deficiencies the tests disclosed:

Unsuitable Abbreviations.

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------|---------|-----------------|
| ad. | (advertisement) | Man. | (Manhattan) |
| & | | P. S. | (Public School) |
| asst. | | steno. | |
| co. | | stenog. | |
| grad. | (graduate) | yr. | |
| mach. | (machine) | % | |

Misspelled Words.

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| accaptable | memiograph |
| adversment (advertisement) | neccosy (necessary) |
| advisement (advertisement) | oblidge |
| aguire (acquire) | payed |
| aplacation | permenent |
| bussiness | possition |
| course | pretaining |
| enformed | pront (prompt) |
| equippes | quiet (quite) |
| esstenial (essential) | throughly (thoroughly) |
| grammer | type-writter |
| jober (jobber) | type-writist |

In order that the situation may be set forth as vividly as possible, we reproduce here some of the letters and paragraphs which the tested applicants wrote. It should be remembered that *all the pupils represented have been trained at commercial schools and are candidates for stenographic positions.* The letters, with exceptions which we note, are typical. There may be none worse, but there are dozens of each sort equally poor. The first five letters are fac-simile reproductions. The last two letters, illustrating the habit of omitting pronouns of the first person in writing a business letter, are extreme instances; but the fault is a prevalent one. This may be the result of teaching English through the medium of business forms, the sole method employed by some schools. The italics are ours.

New York, N. Y., Aug. 17, 1916

Brown & Wilson,
549 Broadway,
New York City.

Mr. John Wilson,
Dear Sir:

You are in need of a stenographer
I am in need of a position as stenographer.
Why not co-operate?

I am sixteen years of age, and I have had two and one-half years of high school education.

I have had no experience as a stenographer. The salary I expect is nine dollars per week.

Respectfully yours,

New York, July 7, 1916

Messrs. Brown & Wilson

549 Broadway attention to
Mr. John Wilson
N. Y. C.

Dear Sir,

I have read your advertisement in the Morning's World that you are in need of an stenographer.

I am seventeen years of age and was graduated from P. S. and then I went to a business class in [redacted] and learned stenography for five months. I did not work in any place therefore I have not had any experience but I will try to get experience if you will try me. I wish to apply for the position for as much a salary as you can give a beginner.

Hoping that you will let me know I am.

very truly yours,

New York, July 18, 1916

Mr. John Wilson,
549 Broadway,
New York City.

Dear Sir:-

In answer to your letter that the teacher of the Employment Office gave me I will now write my experience & so forth:- My age is 16 years. I graduated Business School & had one week's experience as a stenographer & typewriter. I went 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ months & received at this position \$6.50 but I will also start for \$6. .

Yours respectfully,

Mr. John Wilson,
Brown and Wilson.
549 Broadway

Dear Sir:

I desire to ~~obtain~~ employment with your firm in the capacity of stenographer. I am now twenty years of age, and am a public school graduate. My education also includes a few years attendance at one of the City high schools. I have just graduated a business school ~~after six months of attendance now~~ and my good record there ~~for~~ makes me of the opinion that I shall do well as a stenographer. My business education is however not limited to stenography. I have also displayed a fair degree of efficiency in typing, filing and general office work. In fact I can do almost any kind of office work with the ~~credible still~~ ~~desirably~~ ~~desirably~~ the salary I would accept at the start is twelve dollars per week.

Trusting to be favorably considered, I am
truly yours.

Messrs Wilson & Brown
549 Broadway
New York City

New York July 11, 1916

Gentlemen.

Having heard that you were in need of a typeset I hereby apply for the position.

I am a graduate of both Public School, and of Business Schools attending the latter for (1) seven months in the which I finished my entire course

As soon as my course was completed I was employed by the and have been with them for the past two half (2 1/2) years.

I am seventeen and ~~one~~ half years old and except a salary of eight (\$8) dollars. to begin with.

Trusting that my application will meet with your approval I remain.

Respectfully yours

MR. JOHN WILSON
Brown and Wilson
549 Broadway
New York City

Dear Sir:

I would like to apply for the position of stenographer, I am twenty years of age. *Having left public School in the fifth grade.* Am attending _____ Business School for the past eight months, having just my school experience. I will accept \$9.00 a week to start.

Trusting you will give my application careful consideration. And send me an early reply,

Respectfully,

MR. JOHN WILSON,
549 Broadway,
New York City.

Dear Sir:—

In looking up in today's "World" having a vacancy for a bookkeeper and typist.

I will start with \$7.00.

I went in _____ Business School.

Yours truly,

MR. JOHN WILSON,
c/o Brown & Wilson
549 B'way. N. Y. C.

Dear Sir:—

Respectfully apply for the position of stenographer at your office.

Am twenty (20) years of age, honest, willing, and ambitious.

Have graduated from an academic high school. Also, studied stenography and typewriting at _____ for six months.

Am a speedy and accurate stenographer. Have had a few years experience in same, and have references to show that I am A1.

Desire \$15.00 per week at the start.

Trusting, that you will call for me, and test my abilities, I am,

Yours very truly,

MR. JOHN WILSON,
c/o Messrs. Brown & Wilson Co.,
549 Broadway,
New York City.

Dear Sir:

Beg to make application for a position as stenographer with your firm.

Am a Christian young lady 20 years of age, with one year's high school education; also a graduate of _____ Business College.

Was employed in the accident insurance business for over four years, acting in the capacity of policy-writer for three years, and stenographer and dictaphone operator for the remainder of the time.

Would appreciate a salary of \$12.00.

Hoping to receive a favorable reply at your earliest convenience, I am,

Yours truly,

Some letters, in other respects fairly good, have disclosed in the opening sentences the writer's ignorance. Others with unconscious irony used poor English in the very phrase that makes a request for high wages. Illustrations of both sorts are cited:

"Hearing of an omission in your place for a stenographer, I would like to apply for the position."

"In applying for a position as a stenographer in your concern, I am sixteen years of age."

"On seeing your advertisement in the todays world would apply for the position as stenographer."

"In answer to your letter as a stenographer beg to say I am 17 years old."

"I have formerly been getting \$10.00 per week and which salary I now desire."

"The amount of salary I believe to deserve is \$10.00 per week."

"Being that I had some experience I would like \$10.00."

"Referring to salary, I would expect Ten Dollars for Start."

"I am looking for a position as stenographer, type-writer, office routine and detailed work \$15/1800."

The paragraphs of comment were, on the whole, much worse than the letters. The reason may be that special training is commonly given in the letter form. In many cases a letter written in fairly good English was followed by a paragraph of extremely poor construction. We wonder if anyone can read these statements without being stirred to do something to prevent the teaching of stenography to such unprepared young pupils. The comment, apart from its test value, gives us the opinion of young office workers relative to High School education, as we have already

pointed out. Workers who have had a year or more of experience, are in a position to check up their advantages and handicaps with whatever the demands of business may have been; and it is worth while to know what these workers think. It was to be expected, perhaps, that those who had attended High School should, as a rule, speak of its merits, and that not a few of those who had no High School education should confess a deeply felt need for it. Some applicants understood the question to call for a comparison of public and private commercial schools. The following quotations illustrate faults in English. The succeeding ones give the most clearly expressed comments regarding the office worker's needs in education. The italics are ours.

Examples of Deficient English:

- 1 "Referring to the education of a stenographer in either High School or Business School, it is splendid. Prepares a person ready for the business life and not only that but it is a very good thing to know. *In case of a hurry and are in need of copyng a letter, just take it down in shorthand. The High School as far as being concerned I think teach it much better the class as a whole all keep to-gether, and being in Business School you take it up yourself the teacher is just there to see and to correct you if a mistake is made.*
But taking it all to-gether they are both very good."
- 2 "*I believe a person having a good high school education, aids them in being a good stenographer; for the following reasons; that one mind is broadened and is more capable of filling a good position, and also makes one more intelligent.*"
- 3 "*In being a stenographer with a high school education, I think that a firm would be more successful with same, as she has more facts about that course, that is, more broad minded as (has) she has had more years of training than a business school stenographer has.*"

A high school stenographer before she finishes her course, she has to pass a regents exams, and that makes her more capable of fulfilling this position."

- 4 "High School education will help us a great, if we ever wish to become a stenographer. why—because English is the only important factor, whether we are extremely rapid typist, really the whole of it rest on our ability as perfect spellers, and a clear knowledge of English, and our memory and power of concentration, proofing that high school does give us the chance to improve our spelling and the power of memorizing."

Opinions on the Need for High School Education:

- 1 "I believe the value of a High School education to a stenographer is not realized until she enters a business life. The ability to recognize and correct an ungrammatical sentence hurriedly dictated, saves the employer many irritating moments and enables the stenographer to feel that her education has been of some use, tho in a small way."
- 2 "The high school graduate has not only had time to become thoroughly familiar with the spelling of ordinary, every-day, words but has had many opportunities to learn a large number of new ones, so that she does not have to waste her employer's time whenever there is a word at all unusual. This alone would be enough to show the superiority of a high school graduate."
- 3 "Does a stenographer, to be a good stenographer, require a high school education? This is a question that has been asked many times. It is my opinion that a high school education, while a very valuable asset, is not an absolute necessity. True, to be a thoroughly efficient stenographer, one must be able to spell, must know at least the fundamentals of grammar, and have a fairly good command of English. Eight years of conscientious study in the elementary

school should be a pretty fair starter; a little studying each evening at home, and the library, with its wonderful opportunities, should enable everyone to obtain this knowledge, if he really desires to improve himself and thus, of course, better his opportunities."

- 4 "I did not go to high school, but I think it would have been better, if I would have gone there. Because I see other girls that are stenographers and graduates of High School are better off than I am. They are better because they get a better education there than in any business school."

Private and Public Commercial Schools Compared:

- 1 "My opinion of the education given in High School is that in High School one cannot get familiar with the business world so well as in business schools. In High School, teachers have not the time to go out and find the real style of business teaching, because they teach other subjects as well as commercial subjects. In business school you come in contact with business people, therefore I would advise girls to go to business schools and finish their course in a few months, and they will know just as much as a High School graduate."
- 2 "A high school education is a valuable asset to any stenographer. First, because the study of English is given a prominent part in the curriculum of studies, and a knowledge of English is essential to a good stenographer. Second, because stenography and typewriting are taught more slowly, and for that reason better, than is possible in business schools. Last, for the reason that a girl is, in the majority of cases seventeen or eighteen years of age when she graduates, and a business school graduate is about fifteen."
- 3 "I think a High School education is very good. You have plenty of time and there is no hurry

and scramble to get through the work as you can't finish before the rest. Then you are sure that the teachers are not trying to push you through as it is neither their gain or loss. Individual training (advertised by private commercial schools) is not good. Class work is better because many times you think you understand and when a girl asks a question you profit by her mistakes”

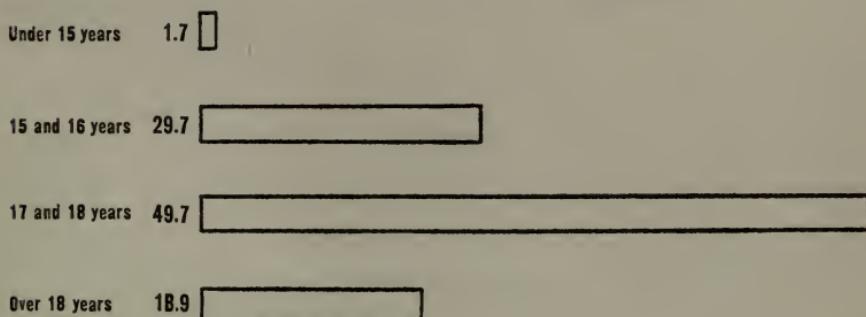
- 4 “The environment at high school freshens up the stenographer and it is that which puts an interest in her work, as for inst. the teachers, the social, athletic and literary activities of the school, the comrades, all are of the best source as only the Board of Education would allow and supply; these put together make up a full fledged stenographer in due time.”
- 5 “High School education in the equipment of a stenographer is very good. My reasons for this opinion are in the first place you have the regular school hours and I think the teachers take more time and have more patience in explaining a subject more thoroughly and the pupils are not so afraid to ask questions when they do not understand the subject being explained the first time.”
- 6 “In the business world, we find the more we know of other things than stenography, the more fitted we are for the position we hold. In high school, we learn how to increase our vocabulary, the use of English, and other studies necessary for progress in business.”

INTENSIVE STUDY OF ONE SCHOOL'S PRODUCT.

The product of one private commercial school has been made an object of special study. The school selected was one which we believed to be fairly representative of a large number of ordinary, moderate-priced schools which offer

no special inducements and exercise no special discrimination in the kind of pupils they undertake to instruct. It is one of the largest schools in New York and it has been established here for a number of years. The pupils come "from everywhere," as its manager states, although nearly all live within the boundaries of Greater New York. Probably the clientele is as cosmopolitan as that of any school in the city. The employment bureau records, upon which we have based statistical studies in the first part of this chapter, give information for a total of 185 girl office workers who have gone out from this school since 1913. The diagrams which follow set forth this information. Eighty per cent of the group took their business training course soon after leaving elementary school. We can, therefore, conclude that many of those who were seventeen or eighteen years of age at the time of registration at the employment bureaus, must have had, when they came to the bureaus one year or two years of experience in wage earning. In many cases, those who were over eighteen must have had experience of more than two years' duration. Diagram IV shows that more than two-thirds of the workers studied were over seventeen years of age.

DIAGRAM IV.



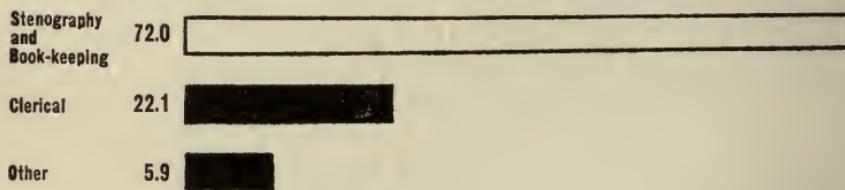
Analysis of 185 records of office workers trained in one school. Shows age of persons represented in Diagrams V, VI, VII.

The records contain information for 293 positions held by these 185 workers. Diagrams V, VI and VII, showing the kinds of positions, their duration and the wages received in them, are presented in such a manner that they may be compared; and they should be considered, also, in relation to the facts about age shown by Diagram IV. A summary of the findings might be put thus: The majority of workers included in this study were over seventeen years of age. The majority of positions held by these workers made definite use of stenographic or bookkeeping training; but the majority of positions were held for less than six months and compensated by less than \$8. A close study of the wage figures shows that three per cent of the positions received less than \$6.

DIAGRAMS V, VI, VII.

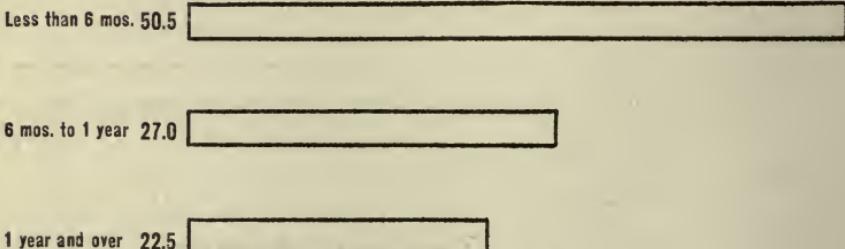
V.

KINDS OF POSITIONS HELD.



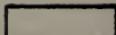
VI.

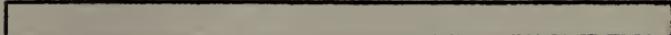
DURATION OF POSITIONS.



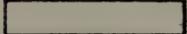
VII.

WAGES RECEIVED.

Under \$6 8.7 

\$6 and \$7 48.6 

\$8 and \$9 30.2 

\$10 and over 12.5 

Analysis of 293 positions. Held by 185 office workers trained in one school.

We have visited at their homes and interviewed personally twenty girls whom this school has trained. Those girls were chosen whose application at the employment bureaus had been recent and whose addresses were most clearly recorded; thus they constitute what is practically a random list. They live in several sections of the city and attended the school at periods which for the most part do not coincide; for these reasons we conclude that these girls probably do not know one another in more than an occasional instance. Yet certain phases of their comment, dealing with the honor rather than the educational calibre of the school, met striking corroboration. The idea is prevalent among these students that the school is not honest in financial matters, large or small; that pupils may be failed purposely in order that more tuition money may be received and that, to this end, final examinations are given only at intervals of two weeks or more. While it may generally be considered to the credit of a school not to graduate students until they are ready for graduation, we are led to believe that some other element than the student's advantage may enter, in the case of this particular school; for, in the course of all

our follow-up interviews with students of other schools, no accusations were offered such as the students of this school, almost without exception, made. It was further charged by the students that undue profit is gained from the books and supplies which the school compels the students to purchase from its stock. We selected this school for special study, as we have said, because we believed it was a typical, average school. We cannot now consider, however, that it is average in so far as the students' relation to it is concerned. In only one school included in our investigation was such criticism encountered.

Students' opinions regarding the quality of instruction were less in agreement; and when divergence occurs among so small a group as twenty we cannot attach much significance to what is said. We should make it clear, however, that several of those who condemned the school's practices in financial matters commended the instruction. A survey of the opinions of the group showed five pupils who endorsed the school on the ground of scholarship, eight who said it should not be endorsed on any ground, and seven who refrained from committing themselves. Of those five who stated, in answer to a direct question, that they would recommend the school, it should be said that one has never held or wished to hold an office position and so has had no real opportunity to test her training; and one was reported upon as inefficient when her employer was visited.

The interviews with some of those students who do not favor the school either in its policy or its methods of instruction, are here quoted from our records verbatim:

Frances L.—Thinks the instruction was good on the whole. Had some trouble at first in learning the ways of her employer but thinks this was to be expected. Said in criticism that the school makes too much profit on stationery and supplies; and that if one does not "watch out" there are likely to be mis-

takes in the monthly bills to the student's disadvantage. Claimed she had known of instances in which an extra quarter of a term was incorrectly charged. Said, "If you object to a mistake and can point out exactly what is wrong, the school will correct it."

Rose B.—The girl's mother did most of the talking. She exclaimed, "All dat money, all dat money, and no help from de school! What dey do for you? Nothing." Rose's objection was that the school was commercial in its spirit; that it failed to find positions; that the instruction was not very thorough and that the school tried its best to "keep you back." She said that, when students take examinations at the end of each set of lessons, "they try to fail you and they fail you extra."

Rose W.—This girl, tall, lanky and sharp-faced, said, "I didn't like that school very well. I did not care much for the teachers; they did not pay any attention to you but you had to go ahead and get it all yourself. They tried to hold you back, you know. If you don't pass your final examination you have to pay a month extra."

Elsie B.—Stated that it is the plan at this school to advance pupils from one shorthand teacher to another whenever a certain speed is reached. There are four teachers in all and this changing about, Elsie said, is confusing because all teachers do not write alike even when the same system is used. She secured her first position herself but did not get along very well because she was nervous in taking dictation. She said, "Employers talk first fast and then slow, while the dictation at school is measured by a watch."

Rose K.—A gnome-like little person, dwarfed almost to the point of deformity. "If I would 'a' known," she said, "I never would have gone to no business school. I was going around

mont' after mont' and couldn't get no position, so I lost all my speed. Some schools, like _____, shows you different tings, like de filings, and all dat, but not dis school." When asked why she had gone she said, "De agent boddered me so."

Clara K.—This girl said she had "some experience in High School" but had to stop because her father failed in business. "I got through at business school before six months were up," she said. "They couldn't keep me back." "Did they try?" she was asked. "Yes, they did. They tried to keep me from taking the examinations. When I had nearly finished the final examination the teacher called me to the telephone and then refused to let me make up the time, and because of this she said I must wait and take it all over again."

Lena S.—Undersized and apparently unhealthy. Apartment poor yet not indicative of extreme poverty. Talked fast and eagerly against the school and had nothing good to say of it. Said, "They skin you something fierce; they make girls stay on week after week by telling them that they did not pass the examinations. If you do not pass in the fourth speed class you have to remain in school two more weeks before they give the examination again." She said also, "They skin you for stationery."

Helen W.—Her objection to the school is that it is unfair in keeping pupils too long, so as to obtain more money from them. Said she had completed the necessary work and was ready for the final test but was prevented by the school from taking it, first by one excuse and then another. Finally her mother went to the school and showed the assistant some papers the daughter had brought home from the school, complaining that they were marked too strictly. The assistant admitted that the mistakes were slight but merely said that the principal was away and urged that the daughter remain two weeks longer.

The mother refused to allow this and the girl has therefore no diploma. She said, however, that the teaching was good and that she was "thoroughly grounded in stenography."

An attempt was made to interview the first employers of a number of this school's students. We included, among others, employers of the twenty girls we had visited in order that we might view the statements of these girls from the employers' standpoint. As in other follow-up work, those names were chosen for which we had most recent information and for which addresses were most definitely stated. Our effort to find forty employers was successful in thirty-one instances, although three of these persons could not recall the employee inquired for. Those who were not seen had moved, terminated their business or could neither be found nor traced. The comments made by employers show instances of satisfaction as well as complaint. In fourteen cases girls were spoken of favorably and in nine cases unfavorably; in five cases the employers could remember no more about a girl than the kind of position she had held or the simple fact that she had at one time been employed. But, in order that the comments of employers may be better understood, we should state that ten of the employees in question held clerical positions in which their stenographic or bookkeeping training was not used; and several of the employers were illiterate men who maintain small and somewhat undesirable offices. We were able to secure interviews with the employers of only four of the girls quoted above. Paraphrases of the remarks of these employers follow:

Mr. C., Manufacturer, Regarding Frances I.—"She ain't what I call first class. She could read her notes back but was slow about it. Her typewriting could have been a good deal improved." He said, however, that she was capable of learning and would not have been discharged if the firm had not dissolved.

Mr. B., Agent, Regarding Rose B.—He remembered Miss B. as a good average girl sufficiently prepared in English. She was able to take thirty to fifty letters daily and to transcribe them acceptably.

Mr. F., Manufacturer, Regarding Rose W.—“She wasn’t efficient or alert; she was unbusinesslike and slow. She could not be called competent; yet she could read her notes, could get up a good letter and she had ability to learn to improve.”

Mr. K., Lawyer, Regarding Elsie B.—It was not possible, he said, to state that Elsie B. had been desirable as a stenographer. “She had no speed at all,” he asserted. She was discharged because of inefficiency. “She could not do the work for us,” he said in conclusion.

The wage-earning experience of the 185 students of this selected school is shown to be similar in a general way to that of the large group of 1035 workers, discussed earlier in this chapter, who represent training in a variety of schools. The chief difference is that the small group of 185 held a higher percentage of positions in which stenographic or bookkeeping training was useful; but it is also true that a higher percentage of their positions were of short duration. Wages for the two groups show little divergence. Our conclusion, based upon this investigation as a whole, is that so long as private schools continue, without check, to try to impose commercial training upon pupils of any degree of illiteracy or unsuitability, just so long will employers be hampered by the blundering inefficiency of the newest stenographic assistants, and the city be filled with discouraged hundreds of position-seeking young people.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. A considerable proportion of the young people in New York City who invest time and money in commercial education become discouraged job-seekers or accept work they could have done without special training. The fault lies not so much in the quality of their stenographic or bookkeeping training as in their deficiency in English composition or their personal unsuitability. They are persons whom the private schools should never have accepted for training.
2. Private commercial schools should in some way be made to feel responsible, as they do not now do, for the numbers of persons who enter upon but are incapable of completing their courses. Published lists of enrollments and graduations for each year, or unpublished lists sent to the State Department of Education, would call attention to this situation wherever it exists.

CHAPTER 4.

SOLICITATION OF PUPILS.

Private commercial school solicitation of eighth grade pupils about to be graduated from public schools is general. Of 1,952 such children, in 24 school districts, 1,288 were reached by agents or through the mails. This soliciting was done by 46 different private commercial schools.

As many as twelve private commercial schools have operated at the same time in a single school district. There is more solicitation of girls than of boys.

Names and addresses of pupils about to be graduated are secured from school children, from name brokers, or by disguised advertising.

Most solicitors work on commission and have no other connection with the school which employs them. They can make verbal contracts which the school later may not uphold.

Arguments used most effectively by agents are the shortness of the course, the futility of High School education or training, the undesirability of doing factory work, and the guarantee of a position.

Public school efforts to present High School opportunities are varied; the printed information is academic.

"We are obliged to send paid solicitors into the field to correct the statements made against us by the representatives of competitive schools"—one school proprietor said when asked about his methods in securing pupils. In a number of instances our investigation has indicated that such an assertion as this may have very real foundation. Unscrupulous methods between rival schools have been brought to light to a greater extent in connection with solicitation of pupils than in any other way. One method, in common use among certain schools, is inter-employment of

Chapter 4 is based upon the following data:

Interviews with 1952 children about to be graduated from public elementary schools. These represent 29 public schools located in 24 districts of Manhattan and the Bronx. Records made, in detail.

Interviews with principals of 20 public elementary schools of Manhattan and the Bronx. Records made, in detail.

soliciting agents. In order to secure the names of possible pupils, to cover a rival's territory or to know how to annihilate a rival's chief arguments, a school may induce the rival's solicitor to become its own employee. For example, we interviewed a girl of twenty, a bright, vigorous Russian, who had been employed successively by four schools. These were located near together and all drew upon the same area for their patronage. Of course she was under the necessity of telling children that that school was the best which happened at the moment to be employing her. The record states:

Miss B began by working for Mr. I. Soon Mr. J, a teacher in Mr. I's school, decided to open a school of his own and persuaded Miss B to work for him. Several weeks later she sued Mr. J for withholding part of her pay, and won the case. She believes Mr. J. withheld the pay in order to prevent her leaving him. One day, while she was working for Mr. J, she and a representative from the K school had met in a public school pupil's house, both laboring for the pupil's patronage. Miss B said she secured the girl and also the admiration of the rival solicitor. He said to her, "If you ever want a job, come to me. I am the manager at K's." Therefore when Miss B left Mr. J. she applied to the K school, was accepted and remained three years. Her next employment was in the L school, the most energetic rival the K school has. She said that in both L and K schools she was expected to "take liberties with the truth" and to speak compromisely of other schools.

Twenty-two proprietors of private commercial schools discussed with us the general subject of solicitation. Ten of the number, representing chiefly the smaller schools, stated that they do not employ soliciting agents. Eleven proprietors admitted that they have such agents; but one of these proprietors qualified his statement by saying that an agent is sent only in response to inquiries for informa-

tion. One proprietor secures most of his pupils by personal solicitation, but the visits are made by teachers in the school instead of by agents. If soliciting is to be done, the use of teachers is commendable; for there is little likelihood that a teacher, whom a pupil will see and know when he comes to school, will make promises that are not to be fulfilled. The paid agent works on a commission basis, as a rule; and, in his eagerness to persuade children to sign application blanks, he can exaggerate and guarantee without check if he desires. He may even make a verbal contract for a reduced cost for the course, which the school will not be bound to uphold. The experience here recorded illustrates what has happened:

The mother of the girl who was being interviewed became very much excited when the M school was mentioned. She said, "You can't trust them. They sent a man here and he told me if my girl started in August she could have summer rates and we could get the whole course for \$50. Instead of that the school sent me a bill for more money and in the end I had paid \$70." Her claim for reduction, promised by the solicitor, received no recognition from the management of the school. Elsie, the daughter, stated that the man came often when he was trying to secure her for the school and that he was sometimes intoxicated. She told the manager of the school about this and he said he intended to discharge him. Later the man was discharged and became the agent of the N, a rival school. He returned then to see Elsie and persistently tried to persuade her to change to the N school, although she was well along in her course in the M school already chosen.

SOLICITATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL CHILDREN.

In June, 1916, with the co-operation of the Board of Education, an inquiry was made into the methods and extent of private commercial school solicitation in so far as it affects

children in 8-B classes about to be graduated. We interviewed 1952 children. These were boys and girls in graduation classes of all the school districts of Manhattan and the Bronx, except two. Our failure to cover the first and second districts was a matter of circumstance rather than intention. We found that 1288 children had been reached, and by a total of forty-six different private commercial schools. Agents had come to their homes from more than half these schools; and letters, circulars and other advertising material had been sent by all of them. **One child had been reached by nine schools; most children had been reached by five or six.** Usually, in girls' classes, 90 to 100 per cent. of the pupils had been communicated with in some way; but in boys' classes the percentage was lower. The school districts most solicited are in Harlem; the two least solicited districts cover, one the outskirts of the Bronx and the other a section of Manhattan which has a fairly large negro population. In a number of instances as many as twelve private commercial schools were found active in a single school district.

School proprietors, as a rule, assert with frankness that they purchase names of elementary school graduates from dealers. The investigation has procured from school children the business cards of two of these "name brokers," both of which have post office addresses in Greater New York. Some schools, instead of buying names, get them themselves by various means. One school conducted in a daily paper a "popular school contest" in which only members of elementary school graduation classes might participate. Voters were asked to send their names and addresses. This plan provided a solicitation list.

A number of children reported that they had sold to dealers or agents lists of names of seventh and eighth grade students. The usual compensation is two cents a name; but in one case \$2 a list was promised and in several cases the

offered reward was an autograph album. Some children reported sending names and receiving no pay in return. Children who gave names and addresses secured them as a rule by inquiring among their classmates. Teachers and janitors as well as pupils have been asked to prepare these lists.

Some business schools have sent directly to the principal's office supplies of blotters, rulers and other useful trifles carrying the advertising of the school, and have asked to have these distributed. So far as we know, such permission is not given. In other cases, representatives have placed these things in piles on a teacher's desk in the class-room at noon without permission, hoping that they will be distributed during the afternoon session. A few elementary school papers have carried a commercial school's advertisement.

Various forms of advertisements were left at homes by agents, or sent to the children by mail. Among these forms were rulers, blotters, buttons, "dope" capsules, picture postals, graduation congratulations, invitations to dances, application forms on postal cards addressed to the school, illustrated booklets, lists and pictures of graduates. Reference is made to some of these in Chapter 5. Two schools gave dances to the children of elementary graduation classes. A little girl of fourteen gave the report first quoted. The second report was offered by a girl of like age who attended the dance at a different school.

"Many kids were there, all 8-B girls, I think, except a few of them that go to that school already. There were many more girls than boys. It was very hot and crowded and they were screaming from the tops of their voices but it was nice decorated. Nine o'clock I went home, but I heard they had later refreshments."

"I knew girls who went to the dances and did not come home until two o'clock in the morning, alone. They said they had a good time."

The influence of public school principals and teachers is probably to be connected with the unfriendly or at least disinterested reception which the children in many instances claim to have given to agents or to advertising propaganda. The following are typical remarks:

“He started to speak but my mother said it was not necessary.”

“My mother shut the door to him.”

“I never took any interest.”

“I did not care to look at it”—speaking of a circular.

Many of the children whose homes had been visited were not at home at the time the agent came and had not cared to inquire of their parents what he had said. Some of those who had received advertising material had merely glanced at it and thrown it away without remembering distinctly what they had read; but a little questioning generally drew from the children some idea or claim which had impressed them. The following quotations from the records will illustrate the kinds of appeals that most effectively reached them:

“Many scholars get payable positions.”

“The principal himself teaches in the classes.”

“He said it was very clean there.”

“He said they treat the girls very nice.”

“Great men are graduates from that school.”

“I could come a few days free to try if I like it.”

“It is better than High School if I want to go into business.”

“You have individual instruction.”

“Two futures are open. One for the working girl—life is miserable; one for the business girl—life is enjoyable.”

A statement regarding the persistency of solicitors in calling is difficult. Agents have come to the homes in the children's absence and it is not known whether they were repre-

sentatives of schools which had already reached them or of other schools. In one school district a woman solicitor is reported to have called upon certain children, for a period, regularly each week. We have, however, considerable evidence of persistency in argument. The following quotations illustrate this:

“He talked on until my mother got tired of hearing him.”

“A man came to my house several times. He would not leave until my father signed the blank that if I graduate I would go to their school.”

It should be said to the credit of certain schools that they have made no effort, so far as we know, to dissuade children from their plan to continue their general education; and we have found several instances of a solicitor’s positive advice to children to enter high school. In a number of cases a solicitor has told a child she is too small for business school. But in the case of the majority of schools which employ solicitors, the strongest and most frequently used argument is the futility or unsuitability of a high school course for the pupil in question. The following are typical quotations showing the children’s report of what solicitors have said.

“High School is not right for girls who would like to help their mothers. Business school gets right to work; high school drags it along.”

“He’d get me done quicker in one year than high school would in three years.”

“At high school the first two years they only teach you what you learn in the elementary schools, while in the business school you can become a bookkeeper in six months.”

“He said, ‘You’re such a big girl you should go to business school. You could get almost any position.’ ”

"High School takes a long time and then you are no good."

"High School takes four years and girls don't keep single so long."

"He told my mother that he thinks business school is better for me than high school, being that I'm not such a bright girl."

"He said I should go to business school because I was such a good scholar, in fact one of the best pupils in my class. I think he must have heard it from my teacher."

We have desired, especially, to find out the procedure of solicitors in the case of those children who had already decided to go to high school. We find our records complete enough to give information for 153 such children. Table 7 shows that high school attendance was definitely opposed in more than half the cases.

TABLE 7: PROCEDURE OF SOLICITORS REGARDING HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION. SHOWS ADVICE TO 153 CHILDREN WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY DECIDED TO ENTER HIGH SCHOOL.

| | Number of Children Advised | Number of Private Commercial Schools Represented |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| Advised against attending high school | 82 | 16 |
| Told that private commercial school is as good as high school..... | 14 | 7 |
| Not dissuaded from attending high school, but given name of private commercial school and told that solicitor would call again..... | 22 | 9 |
| Not dissuaded from attending high school; solicitation apparently withdrawn | 25 | 12 |
| Advised to attend high school for a while, but to enter private commercial school later..... | 5 | 4 |
| Advised to attend high school..... | 5 | 5 |

During the last week before June graduation the influences which favor high school attendance are at their maximum of strength; moreover the members of the graduation classes, when asked about their plans, know that the answer which will please their principal and teachers is "High School." We do not, therefore, attach great value to the information we gathered concerning the success of solicitation. It may be summarized by saying that the proportion of children who affirmed that they were going to private commercial schools was small; a larger proportion were undecided about what they might do. Considerably more than one-half proclaimed their intention of entering high school. The real answer to such inquiry is to be found in the thousands of children of high school age which at all times make up the enrollment of the private commercial schools.

COUNTER-EFFORTS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

What are the public schools doing to help these children make wise decisions regarding the choice of commercial education and the choice among sources of commercial instruction? What are they doing to make clear the opportunities which the Board of Education holds out to graduates of elementary schools? In each public school in which our solicitation inquiry was made, the principal was asked those questions. To the first question, an answer not unusual was, "We warn them against the private schools unless we know about a reliable school." That is, the principals and teachers have had no way of discriminating among schools and have sometimes found safety in warning against all. Some suggestions which principals and teachers may find useful in advising children, are to be found in Chapters 5 and 6 of this report. It should be stated also that, since these interviews were held, the acting superintendent of schools has issued a statement to teachers giving them some

general instruction on the points we have just described and announcing to them that more concrete information will be sent to them later.

To the second question, various answers were received. Most principals or their eighth grade teachers talk to the children early in the term in regard to high school opportunities. A bulletin of information about public secondary education is received from the Board of Education periodically, distributed among the students and explained. This is discussed also, in some schools, at parents' meetings. The bulletin is concise in information, however, and it is academic in form. When the time comes to fill out application blanks for registration in high school, much effort is put upon urging high school education. Several schools told us of addresses made in assembly, some having been given by representatives of various high schools and some by the district superintendent. From the Board of Education we learned that all high schools send representatives to speak at the schools from which they receive pupils. Principals, generally, seem to feel that they are expected to explain and urge high school courses; but they do not do this according to any official or standardized plan, except through the bulletin already referred to. It may be that standardization for the whole city is impracticable, because the needs vary with the district. In two schools the principal pointed out the futility of suggesting attendance at high school because of the extreme poverty of the children and their consequent need to become wage earners early. One principal expressed herself thus regarding available high school instruction:

"All information about high school courses is given to pupils and their parents. But social standards are wrong. Pupils are ashamed to enter the handicrafts, and it is the pupils who control the parents. Commercial work is chosen as the most 'genteel'."

next to the professions. The high school course is wrong in delaying technical and business instruction until the second high school year. Pupils and their parents would be encouraged to select high school training if first year subjects of study were less academic."

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. The arguments of private commercial school solicitors would be more successfully counteracted if public school propaganda—setting forth the educational and training opportunities in the public school system—could be popularized and adapted more specifically to the individual needs of each school district.
2. The private schools reach the parents of children. The public schools will have to do this also, to a greater extent than they now do, if public school opportunities are to be fairly and clearly presented.
3. School children need to be shown, in graphic concrete ways, that the average eighth grade graduate is not ready for stenographic training; that there are many positions in office work which do not demand stenography; and that, since the advent of the socialized free employment bureaus for juveniles, it is no longer necessary to attend a private commercial school in order to be helped to a position.

CHAPTER 5.

ADVERTISING METHODS.

The mails are the chief means of advertising used by private commercial schools; solicitors are second in importance; the newspapers rank third. The advertising of the schools, as a group, is popular in language and form.

The printed matter of reliable schools places emphasis upon the time the school has been established, the training and experience of teachers, or points out the standards of competency by which a school should be judged.

Some schools have offered for enrollment a reward that could not be claimed easily; have used a card of endorsement which looks but is not authentic; have published letters from graduates claiming a degree of success which their employers in some instances do not support; or their printing contains extravagant claims which will seem plausible and persuasive to the children they are intended to reach.

The mails are the chief means by which the private commercial schools reach their public. Daily and weekly newspapers are used by a limited number of schools for regular brief statements and for occasional special announcements. Most of such advertising appears in the "Help Wanted" section of the papers under the subheading "Instruction." A few public school publications, issued by students, carry private commercial school advertisements, especially at commencement time. Bill boards and street cars have been, occasionally, used.

Chapter 5 is based upon the following data:

All the printed and other advertising propaganda obtainable for 63 private commercial schools. Sent by the schools, on request; also gathered from public school children among whom it had been distributed.

All private commercial school advertising, which appeared in the leading newspapers of New York City, during the two months just preceding the (1916) June graduation of elementary school classes.

Interviews with workers trained at a school which promises graduation in a limited number of days. Records made, in detail.

Follow-up visits and interviews in the homes of 46 persons trained at a school which claims graduation in fewer months than most schools require; also interviews with eight of these students' employers. All interviews recorded in detail. Records showing the occupational experiences of twenty-six other persons who had been trained in this school.

FORMS OF ADVERTISING.

The forms of printed material mailed to or distributed among prospective students are various. A list of these forms is presented in Chapter 4*. A certain school, whose principal seemed to us to have a more than usual degree of dignity, intelligence and educational idealism, has resorted to a "dope" capsule as a form of advertising. This capsule is less than one inch long and made of celluloid. A rolled up bit of paper inside it is labeled "Dope," in black letters, which can be read through the transparent walls of the capsule. When the paper is taken out and unrolled, a statement recommending the school and ending with the words "This is good dope," is found printed on the paper's inner side. No sample of this capsule had yet been received at the State Department of Education several months after it had been in circulation—although there is a regulation that every Regent's registered school, such as this one is, should send to the Department samples of *all* printing and advertising matter. If a school of this school's type finds such advertising necessary in order to capture children's attention, we have in this fact some evidence of the energy of the competition which the school is facing.

Graduates from elementary schools have a very real desire and need for reliable help in choosing among the many commercial schools which surround them during the period just preceding graduation; and this is realized by some of the private schools and used to the schools' advantage. No advertising received by school children attracted so much attention as a certain blue card widely circulated by a "lady," who, the children stated, said she came from the Board of Education. The card read thus:

EDUCATIONAL ADVISORY BUREAU

Organized for the purpose of advising and assisting public school graduates in the choice of educational institutions.

Note:—Representatives of approved schools will mention number on reverse side of this card to prove authority.

*See page 82.

The reverse side of the card bore the names of five New York private commercial schools. From the standpoint of this investigation, these schools represent widely varying degrees of reliability; one of the least desirable in the city is included among them. When we visited the schools to learn about the use of the card we found in only one instance a manager who admitted that he sanctioned its use. This manager told us that a woman, whom he did not know and whose address is unknown to him, asked permission to include his school on the "approved" list; and that although he promised a commission for students thus secured, he had paid none because no students had been produced. Two managers disclaimed all knowledge of the card. One of these evinced no particular objection to the use of his school's name; the other, representing one of New York's best schools, was indignant to find his school listed with others which he regarded as inferior, and he considered taking legal steps to have the card withdrawn.

In several school districts children received an announcement which read in part as follows. The announcement carried with it no more explanation than is given here:

ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS TO BE GIVEN AWAY

Greetings:

We take pleasure in announcing that we will divide One Thousand Dollars among the First Fifty Young Men and Young Women that enroll to take Day or Evening Courses in our school. Application should be made at once, Mr. _____, the Principal of the school, was elected His first contribution to the people of the District is the above named One Thousand Dollars, which he has set aside to be used in appreciation of the great honor conferred upon him by the people of

Respectfully
(Signed with the principal's name.)

The card was not dated and it did not state how and when the counting of the first fifty would begin.

POLICY IN ADVERTISING.

The kind of printed matter which the private commercial schools offer to the public, indicates their true character with remarkable precision. It would almost be possible to make an arm-chair survey of the schools of New York City, the method being simply to sit down and carefully peruse their printed propaganda. In its statement of purpose, the character of its claims, its use of English, and in the quality of taste shown in the material and make-up of the printing, a school reveals itself; and it does this with special effectiveness if its publications are considered in contrast with those of other schools. But reliable judgment of schools on this basis is possible only for persons of some education and maturity. The children for whom this propaganda is designed are not capable of rating it. Extravagant claims, cartoons picturing high success by way of the business school, or even irrelevant color prints of sunsets, are the means which we have found most likely to win their approval and choice.

Three principles seem to underlie the publications of the schools. One principle, and this is followed by a few schools only, is merely to announce the school, its managers preferring to see and talk with the prospective candidate in person and to discuss with him orally the qualities of the school; another is to set forth in a catalog as attractively as possible all the positive information about the school that a prospective student might wish; and the third is to annihilate rivals. Schools which work upon the last named principle give evidence that they have carefully examined the circulars of other schools. The effect of this may be to produce in their own circulars claims that outdo all others in extravagance; to point out a rival's weaknesses in so specific a way that the school criticized will be recognized unmistakably; or to successively discuss claims made by rivals in order to offer proof that the advantages thus set

forth by these rivals are in reality to be looked upon as disadvantages. One of New York's large and popular schools recognizes that the whole city is in competition with it and attempts, in its catalog, to fell each enemy. No school of importance, so far as we can see, escapes a well-aimed blow. The school in question is a moderate priced one, with modern yet not elaborate equipment. Its catalog says that *a school which charges more* than this school, may do so because it does not manage to economize in the matter of running expenses, or because it is willing to take more than legitimate profit. It points out that *a smaller school* cannot have facilities for being a good school—although our investigation shows that this claim can be disputed. It states that *a school which advertises the principal's personal supervision*, is likely to be a neglected school because the principal's time is bound to be taken up with business. *The "nearest" school*, the catalog points out, is no more safe in education than the nearest doctor in illness. It claims that *other schools teach but one or two makes of typewriters*, while this school teaches many. On the basis of our investigation we know this claim to be unsupported by fact if, in speaking of "other schools," it is implied that most other schools are meant. *Schools located in a private house, or a former clubhouse, or an office building* are criticised as not being adapted to school work. All these assertions are direct answers to claims made and information given in the printed advertisements of other schools.

The following are quotations, from various school catalogs, which, it seems to us, any intelligent, adult person should see must be exaggerated or impossible. But the children and the foreign or illiterate parents, for whom they are meant, could not be expected to consider that, and they are likely to accept these statements as conclusive evidence of the excellent powers and possibilities of the school.

"No other school has 60,000 successful graduates in the business world who send only to their Alma Mater for any assistance they, or their employers, need."

"Thus far, each graduate has been placed and is holding a satisfactory position, as per hundreds of records on file at this office." (This school is several years old.)

"We have yet to record a student who did not become proficient in our night school."

"Of the great number of graduates we have no record of even one student who was unsuccessful as far as a position is concerned."

Another sort of advertising which in our opinion is likely to be an unfailing index to the character of the school, is the eulogy. In one instance it takes the form of a letter from the principal to the public, in which the latter is thanked for its "confidence," "encouragement," "kind words" and "good wishes for our success." In another instance, a "Declaration of Loyalty" is published which, the school says, came from the student body. The following is one of the several elaborate sentences which compose it:

"In consideration of your services to us in the past and in appreciation of your best efforts to enable us to complete our studies satisfactorily, and for your extra hard work on Saturdays and Sundays, and your assurance to give us the outside assistance and encouragement we may need, and for your thoughtful solicitations for our comfort and welfare and your endeavors to make our sojourn in your school a period of our life worthy of remembrance, we give you the following pledge of our appreciation, loyalty and co-operation."

Newspaper advertisements, we have already said, are likely to be simple, brief and non-sensational announcements. In only two instances have we observed even an apparent departure from this rule. One school at frequent intervals throughout two consecutive months advertised, "Shorthand for \$10—This Week Only." Anyone who happened to note the successive appearances might be justified in wondering if the claim of "This Week Only" was honestly made. Another school regularly inserts an advertisement offering to teach shorthand in an unusually short time. The proprietor of this school explained to us verbally, when he was visited, that the literal claim was less than we thought. There is no school session on Saturday and Sunday; therefore, the promised number of days is not limited to the number of weeks they seem to indicate. Furthermore, he pointed out that the advertisement claims the teaching of shorthand only and, although the reader may connote typing, it cannot be denied that the advertisement says nothing about it. He concluded, however, by saying that the interpretation the public is likely to give the advertisement is by no means an unsafe one, because he does claim that he can produce pupils who have learned both shorthand and typing proficiently in the promised time, or less. Interviews with students of the school have indicated to us that some of them do not get through in the prescribed time, and some of them do. We are not able to learn the proportionate number included in these two groups. The school was investigated by one of the daily papers more than a year ago, and its report was not favorable. We have obtained, from the office of this paper, the following extract from the letter of a young man who states that he attended this school for about four months.

"I took this course because I thought I could finish in _____ days; but (after four months) I had to leave as I could not afford to put in more time. I could not take more than twenty-five words a minute of

unprepared dictation. I know of other students who were there before me, and who were still there when I left."

On the other hand, we have the testimony of two persons, known to us to be reliable, that they did acquire proficiency in shorthand within the advertised time. These were both women of maturity and superior intelligence and education; we cannot judge, on the basis of their experience, what less favored pupils could do.

The publications of private commercial schools frequently contain lists of their graduates. Such lists are offered as proof of a school's success; therefore, if they are to be accepted as proof, they should be accompanied by whatever information is needed for substantiation. A list of names and addresses with no dates or other indication of the time of graduation is almost valueless unless the graduates, as secretaries to public men or in some other way, have themselves become famous. Names of employers of graduates, unaccompanied by the date of employment and the employers' address, are completely valueless, unless the employing firm is one commonly known.

Letters from graduates are sometimes published. In the case of one school which uses this method of advertising we made a special investigation. The letters, which are addressed to the school, tell of the graduate's success in employment. When we visited the employers named in the letters we found in a number of instances that the graduate who wrote of success was considered incapable by the employer. Thus the endorsement of the schools' training, which the letters imply or state, may lack practical value.

GOOD ADVERTISING.

It would be unfair to close a discussion of the advertising in New York's private commercial schools without some recognition of the honest, intelligent and attractive propa-

ganda of the better schools. A number of such schools put emphasis upon the qualifications of their teachers and show, with dates, the educational institutions attended and the experience of the teachers prior to employment at the school. Those schools which use lists of graduates in recommendation are careful to give the adequacy of information to which this chapter has earlier called attention. Several lay stress upon the value of a good foundation in general education in ways like the following:

“Parents, give your children all the education you can. But do not neglect to give them from six months to a year in a first class business school.”

“Requirements for admission: Nothing less than a grammar school education; high school students are desired.”

One principal points out what constitutes legitimate success for a business school. Another tells concretely what a boy or girl should think about in selecting a school, and asks prospective pupils to consider his own establishment on the basis of such points. Among his suggestions for testing a school are questions like these:

“Is the school well established?

Does it employ good teachers?

What do business men think of it?

What do its graduates think of it?

Do its performances measure up to its promises?

Has it shown a consistent growth?

Does it teach touch typewriting?

Does it, in addition to shorthand and typewriting, have a practical course in office training?

Do its quarters reflect the atmosphere of a modern business office, or rather that of a reception room?”

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. Much of the misleading or false advertising which now reaches children could be eliminated if, by legislative provision, private schools were compelled to file at the State Department of Education samples of *all* advertising material, and the State Department were given power to censor it.
2. It should be made illegal for schools to use published lists of names in endorsement of their work, unless definite addresses are appended and the date of attendance at the school is indicated.
3. If the list of Regents' registered schools is to be continued, non-registered schools should be warned by the State Department of Education against using the terms "approved" or "incorporated" in such a way as to confuse the public with regard to Regents' endorsement. (See Chapter 7).

CHAPTER 6.

THE NATURE OF OFFICE POSITIONS.

There is a large number and wide range of office positions which are not dependent upon stenographic or bookkeeping training. This may be true of the following:

25% of 1,487 office positions held by stenography trained applicants at employment bureaus.

49% of 370 office positions held by stenography trained workers previous to employment at the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

88% of all office positions (733) held at the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company by workers under 21 years. Some of these workers, however, may have an opportunity later to enter stenographic positions.

81% of 1,436 positions representing all office positions held in five establishments of different kinds in Cleveland, O.

A study of 316 office positions held by boys and girls from 14 to 18 years of age shows that trained and untrained workers held practically identical positions at a similar rate of pay.

The standardization of office work makes some second rate stenographers employable provided their personal characteristics are acceptable.

There is indication that some offices can use—in fairly responsible stenographic or bookkeeping positions—bright, well-trained boys and girls who may be 16 years of age or younger.

The low standard product of certain schools appears in some instances to find its place in offices of similar grade.

The present investigation has to do with training, not work; and the material it offers relative to the nature of work and the demand for office workers in New York City, must be suggestive rather than conclusive. **The study of**

Chapter 6 is based upon the following data:

Records showing the occupational experiences of 1035 young people trained in private commercial schools (already referred to in Chapter 3).

Records showing the occupational experiences of 733 office employees at the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. These cover detailed information concerning the 733 office positions held in the employ of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and 370 office positions held by the same workers previous to such employment.

Statistical information showing kinds of positions held by all office workers (1436) in five business houses of Cleveland, O., each house representing a different kind of business.

Bureau of Attendance records, giving detailed information for office positions held by 316 workers between the ages of 14 and 18 years inclusive.

Records showing the occupational experiences of 30 private commercial school graduates, all of whom began wage-earning between the ages of 14 and 16 years. Secured by home visits.

the city's office work is a study in itself and one which needs to be made completely if public commercial schools are to serve the best purpose, if the place of private schools is to be definitely known, and if young people are to receive wise advice in their plans for education, training, and work. Some contributions to the subject have been made already, such as the report of Mr. F. V. Thompson to the Committee on School Inquiry, 1911-1912, and the answer to this report; also the report of a Committee of The High School Teachers' Association of New York City in 1915. But no report, of which we have been able to learn, claims thoroughness in covering the field; and the result is that persons who already had an opinion relative to the kind of commercial education needed are of the same opinion still. Since contrary opinions are thus adhered to, it would seem that the truth, or the whole truth, has not yet been learned; and it is evident that a thorough, comprehensive report needs to be produced. Our own reference to the field of work cannot hope, as we have said, to do more than call to the attention of those interested, certain indications about the nature of office positions, based more upon the experience of workers than upon a study of the work itself.

THE FATE OF SEEMINGLY UNDESIRABLE PUPILS.

In going about the city, visiting private schools and seeing group after group of pupils in the process of commercial training, we have wondered: What can business do with girls so mediocre or dull? Will anyone really desire to employ them as stenographers? What can business do with these irresponsible young children? What can business do with these boys and girls who wear soiled clothing, who sharpen their pencils onto the school-room floor and who speak English with a foreign accent and a curious inversion of phrases?

A definite answer to the first question has been given in Chapter 3. The commercial school product which that chapter discussed must have been composed very largely of the kind of girls this question describes. The answer is, then, that they are likely to change positions often and to

fail to progress in kind of work or in wages; and a number of them will have to be satisfied with general clerical—or even non-clerical—positions in which their special training does not find use. No doubt some mediocre workers, whose personality and physical appearance is acceptable, will be able to get and to hold stenographic positions because of a demand for second rate stenographers created by the standardization of work in large business organizations. We do not mean that second rate work is tolerated; but that the letter writing and other routine business is so nearly reduced to forms that it is an easy matter for a girl to become skilful in the particular, unchanging kind of work that she is assigned to do. But we do not see how a girl so employed could hope to become more efficient or to fit herself for advancement, even if the business should be willing to make promotions.

The second question seems to find a partial answer, at least, in our study of a school of Group II. This school is one which impressed us favorably except in regard to the extreme youth of its pupils. Room after room disclosed children of fourteen or fifteen years of age, and some of these small for their years. We asked the principal, "Will you give us the names of fifty young graduates who left the school recently, so that we may find out what has happened to them?" The principal complied readily. A list of fifty pupils was received, thirty of whom we visited. We do not know whether or not this was a selected list; we did not specify that it should not be. We needed to be convinced that even under the promising conditions which this well equipped school offered, business would make serious use of mere children. We have given here in Table 8 a complete record of the information our interviews with these pupils disclosed. Plus sign show that the worker was still employed at the time of interview. The indication is that business, in New York City, may accept in fairly responsible positions, bright girls who have been trained in a good school, even though they are only sixteen years old or younger. The unconvincing fact is the shortness of the period for which most first positions have been held.

TABLE 8: FIRST POSITIONS HELD BY THIRTY GRADUATES WHO LEFT THEIR COMMERCIAL SCHOOL AT SIXTEEN YEARS OF AGE OR YOUNGER.

| Age at leaving Commercial School. | Business of Employers. | Kind of Position. | Period Employed. | Weekly Wage. | No. of Office Employees. |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| 1. 14 | Exporting | Stenography, switchboard, filing..... | 2 mos. + | \$6.00 | 4 |
| 2. 14 | Law | Stenography, typing, some filing..... | 2 mos. | 7.80 | 4 |
| 3. 15 | Manufacturing | Single entry bookkeeping, little responsibility | 2 wks. | | 1 |
| 4. 15 | Investment | Stenography, bookkeeping, answering telephone and general clerical work..... | 2 mos. | 6.00 | |
| 5. 15 | Contracting | Stenography, typing, care of building insurance and answering telephone..... | 2 mos. | 9.00 | 1 |
| 6. 15 | Publishing | Stenography, typing..... | 1 yr. + | 7.00 | 2 |
| 7. 15 | Law | Stenography, typing and general office work | 2 mos. | 7-10.00 | 5 |
| 8. 15 | School | First, circular work; later, a little stenography added | 6 mos. | 6.00 | |
| 9. 15 | Manufacturing | Stenography, typing, Elliott-Fisher billing, taking orders..... | 4 mos. | 9.00 | 2 |
| 10. 15 | Church | Little stenography, responsibility for files .. | 2 mos. | 6.90 | 5 |
| 11. 15 | Law | Stenography, typing and filing, answering telephone | 2 mos. | 10.00 | 2 |
| 12. 15 | Wholesale | First, stenography; later, stenography and clerical work..... | 2 wks. | 6.00 | 1 |
| 13. 15½ | Manufacturing | Charge of books, making deposits in bank and making out checks..... | 1¼ mos. | 8.00 | Many |
| 14. 15½ | Exporting | General office work; taking orders, distributing mail | 3 mos. | 8.00 | 3 |
| 15. 15½ | Brokerage | Stenography, typing..... | 4 mos. | 6.00 | 3 |
| | | | | 5.00 | 5 |

TABLE 8—Continued.

| Age at leaving Commercial School. | Business of Employers. | Kind of Position. | Period Employed. | Weekly Wage. | No. of Office Employees. |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--|------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| | | | | | |
| 15½ | Distributing | Stenography, typing and answering telephone | 3 mos. | 7.00 | 11 |
| 16. | Publishing | First, addressing envelopes; later, stenography and filing | 6 mos. + | 6-6.50 | 6 |
| 17. | Manufacturing | Stenography, assisting bookkeeper | 2 mos. + | 7.00 | 2 |
| 18. | Contracting | Stenography, typing and a little bookkeeping | 6 mos. | 7.00 | 2 |
| 19. | Law | Stenography, answering telephone, general clerical work | 2 yrs. | 7-12.00 | 2 |
| 20. | Retail Selling. | Stenography, typing | 4 mos. | 7.00 | 3 |
| 21. | Laboratory | Stenography, typing, making up bills and orders | 2 mos. | 6.00 | Many |
| 22. | Law | Stenography, typing, filing law blanks | 2 mos. | 6.00 | 1 |
| 23. | Manufacturing | Stenography, bookkeeping and general office work | 5 mos. | 6.00 | 1 |
| 24. | City Marshal. | Stenography and all the work of the office | 4 mos. + | 6-7.00 | 1 |
| 25. | Transportation | Stenography, typing. Taking letters over telephone and transcribing from other clerk's notes | 3 mos. | 12.00 | Many |
| 26. | Brokerage | Stenography, typing; making out bills and answering telephone | 2 wks. | 7.00 | 6 |
| 27. | Real Estate. | Stenography, typing, switchboard | 2 mos. + | 7.00 | 2 |
| 28. | Manufacturing | Stenography, typing, switchboard | 1 mo. | 7.00 | 1 |
| 29. | Publishing | Stenography | 1½ yr. + | 6-10.00 | 50 |
| 30. | Real Estate. | Charge of office; no stenography | Temp. | 10.00 | |
| 103 | | | | | |

Information of the sort given in Table 8 was corroborated in interviews held with twenty girls trained by a philanthropic school of excellent reputation. All left the school at fifteen or sixteen years of age and all but one secured stenographic or bookkeeping work. The usual first wage was \$7, the minimum being \$5 and the maximum \$10. The girls who enter this school are carefully selected, only those being taken for training who are likely to succeed. In most cases they had the aid of friends or relatives in securing their first positions.

The average employer, whether he prefers very young workers or not, may, in many cases have no choice but to take them; for, as our investigation indicates, about three-fourths of the supply of workers provided by the private training schools of the city as a whole, are under 17 years of age. The general employment of such young workers may therefore indicate no general demand for them on the part of employers; and there can be no doubt that the situation has been largely brought about by the deliberate effort of the private schools. Competition has been the cause. As the number of commercial schools increased in the city it became increasingly necessary to recruit pupils from the elementary schools and to secure them in advance of some other school.

The answer to the third question, relative to pupils whose standard of living is low, must be to some extent speculative. It is a matter of common information that a considerable amount of business in New York City is transacted in the offices, shops and stores of its poorer sections. These places are small and not likely to be very clean or comfortable; the proprietors are in many cases foreigners who speak a broken or illiterate English. Yet, except for such characteristics, these may be in no way disreputable places; and legitimate work is there to be done. Who could be willing to do it? The answer is, probably those very boys and girls

whom the third question describes. Some evidence that this is the case is given in the catalog of a commercial school, in a foreign section of the city, which publishes the names and addresses of employers to whom its graduates are sent. Two-thirds of these employers are those who maintain small shops and offices in the neighborhood of the school; and these places are, not improbably, to some extent the sort to which we have here referred. The process seems to be something like this: Children of a certain neighborhood are trained in the schools of that neighborhood to occupy positions in the same neighborhood's places of employment. It will always be a misfortune for any individual to do less well for himself than his utmost ability justifies; but some boys or girls will find employment which satisfies them—with friends or relatives it may be—who are not suitable for a higher grade of employment.

THE ALTERNATIVE OF FACTORY WORK.

The children of the public schools are invited by most private commercial school agents to follow reasoning like this: "Do you want to go to work and earn some money? Very well, you can choose between office work and factory work. People will not think much of you if you do factory work. If you choose office work, you will have to be trained. Therefore, come to our school and take a six months' course in stenography and bookkeeping." Public elementary school teachers and private commercial school agents may be alike in their representation to children that factory work is a fearsome alternative. As a matter of fact, there is no great difference in essential characteristics between some forms of factory work and the mechanical, standardized, clerical work that is likely to be the fate of inferior office workers; and the rate of wages may be the same, or even tend to be higher in the case of factory workers. And we have already shown, in Chapter 3, that

some workers ultimately reach the level of factory work after the expensive experiment of commercial education has been tried and has failed. Workers cannot expect to rise above this level if they have not the foundation upon which special training or opportunity can build. **It is unfortunate that factory work should be generally disparaged; for, because of the social stigma that is still upon it, failures in office work are being produced who might have been successes as industrial workers.** Of course we do not believe that mechanical work should be the fate of anyone who can do and get a better thing. But progressive factory legislation is regulating hours and wages, and continuously more rigorous inspection is making factory work increasingly safe and comfortable. Employers, also, are awakened to the effect of working conditions upon the efficiency of the worker. An illustration of the influence of commercial schools with regard to the prevailing opinion that industrial work is undesirable, is found in the catalog of one school which makes this statement: (The italics are ours.)

“You are now on the threshold of life. The start you make now will lead to Success and Great Joy or to Failure and Unhappiness . . . Brain Work not only brings a higher remuneration than Hand Work, but the Brain Worker is a respected member of Society, while the Hand Worker is classed with the *ordinary and the illiterate.*”

THE USE OF STENOGRAPHY AND BOOKKEEPING.

It is customary, we have said, for the agents of commercial schools to recommend that one who chooses to become an office worker should study the usual subjects of private commercial instruction, namely, stenography and bookkeeping. Our study does not bear out the wisdom of that advice; and our objections to it are based not only upon the present investigation but upon a somewhat prolonged study of commercial work in another city. We believe that,

as a rule, boys' success in business is not in any way dependent upon knowledge of stenography; in the case of girls we believe that stenography, when taught to those who have a good foundation in English, does make for success and affords the best business opportunity girls have. But the present report has to face the fact that it is concerned chiefly with children of no more than elementary school education. Some of them are not fitted for any sort of office work; others are not fitted for the sort that the ordinary business school prepares for; only a few, perhaps, have the personal qualities and the mastery of English necessary for successful stenographic positions. But the important truth which the business schools overlook, so far as training goes, is that **there is in business a host of office positions which do not depend upon either stenography or bookkeeping.** We have illustrated this in paragraphs that follow. A good foundation in general education is more desirable for these positions than specialized training; a course which combines training in office routine, business methods and business organization with general education might be the best preparation if such were obtainable.

Chapter 3 showed that 18 per cent of 1641 office positions, held by a group of commercially trained young people who used the free employment bureaus, were general clerical ones. But we have further evidence from other workers—a group which is likely to represent the commercial schools' better product. By the courtesy of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company we have obtained the occupational history of all office employees, under twenty-one years of age, on the company's payroll in September, 1916. The history of each extends from the time of leaving school to the date in September on which the inquiry was made. We have made two separate studies of the tabulated results—one, of positions held by *commercially trained*

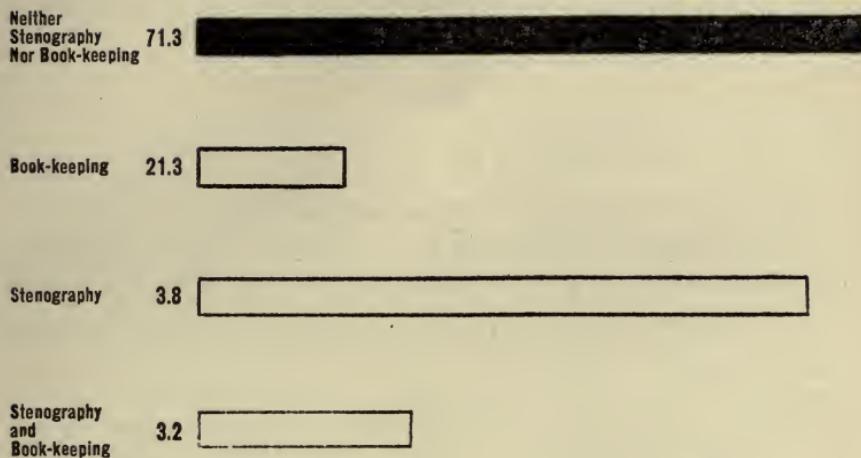
workers *previous* to employment at the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company; and one of all positions held *in* the company's employ *without regard to the workers' training or lack of training.*

1. PREVIOUS POSITIONS OF OFFICE EMPLOYEES OF METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY.

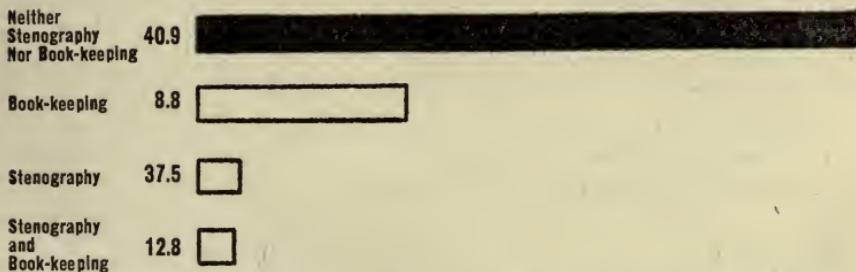
We find that 370 office positions, in various kinds of business, were held by the commercially trained workers previous to their Metropolitan employment. For each of these positions we have the worker's definite statement whether or not use was made of his stenographic or bookkeeping knowledge. The office employees of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company are selected carefully from a long waiting list. Analysis of the general education of the group here studied shows that seventy per cent of the boys and seventy-three per cent of the girls had attended high school for a period. We may suppose, therefore, that if these young people, who had been trained for stenography and bookkeeping, did not always get positions that used their training it is not to be inferred that they were incompetent workers, but rather that evidence is given of the tremendous demand for office helpers in positions of a general clerical nature. Diagram VIII shows that more than two-thirds of the boys' positions, and considerably more than one-third of the girls', made use of neither stenographic nor bookkeeping training.

DIAGRAM VIII.

BOYS' POSITIONS, 99.



GIRLS' POSITIONS, 271.



Use of stenography and bookkeeping in 370 office positions held by a group of commercially trained boys and girls *previous to employment* at the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

The total number of positions which used neither stenography nor bookkeeping is for both sexes 182, or 49 per cent of the whole number studied. To show how great a variety of business was represented in these 182 positions and to answer the objection that they may have been confined to standardized kinds of business, we offer Table 9. To

show the nature of the positions, Table 10 is given. The clerks' positions designated for boys cover stock, sales, tariff, bill, mail, beneficiary, shipping and Junior clerkships; those for girls cover stock, sales, bill, mail, shipping, credit, file, inventory and toll.

TABLE 9: KINDS OF BUSINESS REPRESENTED BY 182 OFFICE POSITIONS WHICH MADE USE OF NEITHER STENOGRAPHY NOR BOOKKEEPING. HELD BY COMMERCIALLY TRAINED BOYS AND GIRLS PREVIOUS TO THEIR EMPLOYMENT AT THE METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY.

| Kind of Business. | No. of Boys' Positions. | No. of Girls' Positions. |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Agency, Bureau..... | 6 | 8 |
| Architecture..... | 1 | 0 |
| Banking and Trust..... | 2 | 1 |
| Brokerage | 0 | 4 |
| Commission | 0 | 1 |
| Construction | 2 | 0 |
| Insurance | 5 | 4 |
| Importing, Exporting..... | 2 | 0 |
| Laboratory | 0 | 1 |
| Law | 4 | 0 |
| Mail Order..... | 2 | 8 |
| Manufacturing | 9 | 16 |
| Municipal Offices..... | 1 | 1 |
| Printing and Publishing..... | 6 | 18 |
| Professional | 0 | 1 |
| Public Accountant..... | 1 | 0 |
| Public Stenography..... | 0 | 2 |
| Real Estate..... | 4 | 0 |
| Retail | 12 | 35 |
| Telephone, Telegraph..... | 2 | 7 |
| Transportation | 4 | 0 |
| Wholesale | 8 | 4 |

TABLE 10: ANALYSIS OF 182 OFFICE POSITIONS WHICH MADE USE OF NEITHER STENOGRAPHY NOR BOOKKEEPING, HELD BY COMMERCIALLY TRAINED BOYS AND GIRLS PREVIOUS TO THEIR EMPLOYMENT AT THE METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY.

| Kind of Position. | No. of Positions Held by Boys. | No. of Positions Held by Girls. |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Clerk | 29 | 38 |
| Clerical Worker..... | 11 | 27 |
| Typist | 0 | 25 |
| Office Boy..... | 18 | 0 |
| General Office Assistant..... | 6 | 9 |
| Telephone Operator..... | 1 | 8 |
| Filing Assistant..... | 2 | 1 |
| Collector, Agent..... | 3 | 0 |
| Cashier | 0 | 2 |
| Buyer | 1 | 0 |
| Copy Holder..... | 0 | 1 |

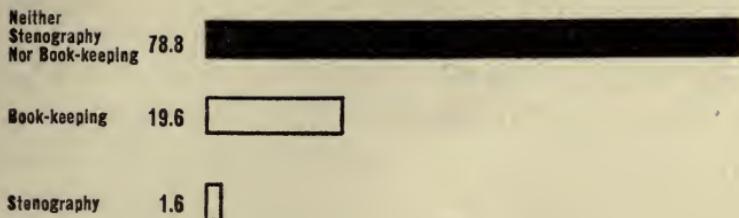
2. Positions held by Office Employees at the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

Our study of all the office positions of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company held by young people under twenty-one years of age cannot, we know, be accepted as a study of the conditions in business as a whole. It can represent only the conditions likely to be met in a large, standardized business. But standardization exists on so extensive a scale in New York City, and its tendency to spread is so great, that the number of workers involved and likely to be involved is sufficient to make standardization a matter to be reckoned with in questions of training. Everyone who has contact with the business world must be aware of the hordes of office employees to be found in railroad and other trans-

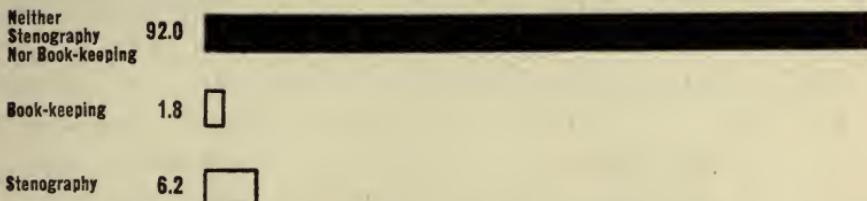
portation offices, in public utilities offices such as the telegraph and telephone, in wholesale houses of the sort which maintain establishments in several cities, in the offices of large insurance corporations and many other kinds of already standardized business. Our information concerning the positions at the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 733 in number, includes, for each position, the workers' definite statement regarding the use of stenography and bookkeeping; and, in the case of those workers who have had commercial training, an additional statement regarding the general value of their training to the position in question. As Diagram IX shows, **more than three-fourths of the boys' positions and nearly all the girls'**, find neither stenography nor bookkeeping useful, as such; not one position finds specific use for stenography and bookkeeping combined; less than one-fifth of the boys' positions, and a negligible portion of the girls', use bookkeeping alone; and the use of stenography alone is for both sexes negligible. We should emphasize the point that the information here submitted came as direct answers to definite questions, and there is no room for conjecture, in so far as the workers' opinion is concerned. The representative of the company points out, in this connection, that the trained boys and girls are likely to prove more desirable than the untrained ones. Yet, he was willing to concede that, for those not specifically employed at stenographic or bookkeeping work, something might be taught which would be more applicable to their work than the ordinary stenography and bookkeeping training which commercial schools generally give. The records show that 59 per cent of the boys represented and 68 per cent of the girls have had commercial training.

DIAGRAM IX.

BOYS' POSITIONS, 218.



GIRLS' POSITIONS, 515.



Use of stenography and bookkeeping in *all office positions* held by employees of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, under 21 years of age, September, 1916.

In the comments which commercially trained students made, relative to the value of the training in their present positions, nearly all disclaimed with finality that it had any value at all. The statement of one worker, which we quote, is not only typical but almost a verbatim report of the comments of many others:

"In my course at the _____ Business School, I received excellent training. At the present time it is of no value to me."

We are of the opinion that a good business school is undoubtedly helpful, to some extent, in making its students acceptable workers whether or not they can use their special training.

Although only thirty-five persons under twenty-one years of age in the employ of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company claimed use of stenography, it is also true that, in the whole organization—which covers an army of 5,500 persons—approximately 350 stenographers are included. This means for some of the young workers—and, admittedly, for the best of them—an opportunity to use their stenography later; for, the stenographic force is recruited almost wholly from persons already in the Company's employ. Thus it must be recognized that a statement of the use of stenography, limited to the workers under twenty-one years, is not completely adequate. There may of course, be a long intervening period before an opening occurs. In view of this, the Company provides speed classes which any who wish may attend, so that their practise may not be lost. And, on the basis of proficiency shown in the speed classes, the Company is able to choose the most promising candidate when a worker is needed.

3. Positions in Business Houses of Cleveland, Ohio.

The positions referred to in Diagram VIII and Table 10 were held in many kinds of business, standardized and unstandardized, large and small. But we cannot tell from these representations just what is indicated for any one business with regard to the proportionate demand for workers who have not had specific training. Such demand was made an object of special study in a report dealing with business houses of Cleveland, prepared by the writer in 1915-1916. A summary, taken from the Cleveland report and giving information for five important lines of business, is offered here in Table 11. It shows the number of stenographic, bookkeeping and other office workers which a single establishment in each business employs. If anyone should be interested to know in detail just what the “other office workers” were, the facts can be learned by

consulting the report of the Cleveland Foundation Education Survey entitled "Boys and Girls in Commercial Work." It will be noted that in every group of the tabulation, except the banking group, the "other office workers" are considerably more than the sum of the stenographic and bookkeeping workers. "Other office workers" make up 81 per cent of the total number of persons which the tabulation covers.

TABLE 11: NUMBER OF STENOGRAPHIC, BOOKKEEPING AND OTHER OFFICE WORKERS EMPLOYED IN FIVE BUSINESS HOUSES OF CLEVELAND, O., EACH HOUSE REPRESENTING A DIFFERENT KIND OF BUSINESS.

RETAIL (185 office workers in a store having 1,000 employees):

| | |
|---|------------|
| Stenographers | 9 |
| Bookkeepers and Assistants, Statistical Workers | 24 |
| Other Office Workers..... | 152 (82.%) |

WHOLESALE (88 office workers in a house having 100 employees):

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Stenographers | 5 |
| Bookkeepers and Assistants, Accountants..... | 14 |
| Other Office Workers..... | 69 (78.%) |

MANUFACTURING (65 office workers in a factory having 1,000 employees):

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Stenographers and Dictaphone Operators.... | 6 |
| Bookkeeper, Accountants and Assistants | 18 |
| Other Office Workers..... | 41 (63.%) |

BANKING (78 office workers in a banking house having 100 employees):

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Stenographers | 10 |
| Bookkeepers and Assistants..... | 35 |
| Other Office Workers..... | 33 (42.%) |

RAILROAD (920 office workers in railroad offices having 1,000 employees):

| | |
|--|------------|
| Stenographers and Typists..... | 45 |
| Bookkeepers (None. A few clerks use book-keeping methods)..... | ... |
| Other Office Workers..... | 875 (95.%) |

4. Positions for Youngest Workers.

Public education authorities in New York City have asked us to make this report specific with regard to the positions in offices which young workers may enter who have not had special vocational training in either stenography or book-keeping. Tables and lists already presented contain some of the information sought; but for our best material we are indebted to a division of the Department of Education. If, therefore, we are able to offer useful data, it is because the Bureau of Attendance accomplished, in 1915, a remarkable piece of follow-up and statistical work covering 1500 boys and girls to whom working papers had been granted. Nearly all came within the age limit of fourteen to eighteen years inclusive. The records thus obtained and tabulated by the Bureau of Attendance are described by it as follows:

"The entire 1500 was made up of records of 750 boys and 750 girls. In all there are some 3000 records on file. When the time came to make the tabulation, funds were forthcoming for only a portion of the investigations so that it was determined to select the most representative and complete records from the total number. The factor of nationality was there kept in mind." . . .

Of 1500 tabulated positions 316 were in some sort of office work, 177 being held by boys and 139 by girls. We have learned from the records that 85 per cent of the boys and 63 per cent of the girls entered their work without commercial training. The positions of these *untrained* boys and girls, their wages, their age and the kinds of business in which the positions were held are listed in Tables 12* and 13.* We believe that the variety of business and positions represented makes the lists acceptable as a cross section of the kind of opportunities offered to young workers by the city as a whole. Tables 18* and 19* which follow give

*See appendix.

corresponding information for the boys and girls *who had commercial training*. We present these tabulations in detail because we consider it worth the reader's while to study them and to note the similarity of the positions and wages in the two sets of Tables 12, 13 and 14, 15. **We believe that this similarity of opportunity for trained and untrained workers has significance for education.** In the case of the boys, the positions in the two tables are almost identical; and if there is a salary difference it appears to be in favor of the untrained boy. The girls' tables show similarity also; but the trained group includes a considerable proportion of stenographic and typing positions which, of course, do not appear in the case of workers who have not been trained.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC SCHOOL.

The significance of this study is, we believe, not that **training is unnecessary**, but that **training need not in all or most cases prepare specifically for stenography and book-keeping positions**. A training for clerical positions in business, in which general education is made an important factor is obviously needed. What specifically should be the content of the training, this report, which does not deal primarily with the field of work, is not prepared to say. A separate, special study must find this out. We think, however, that Tables 12 to 15 inclusive are full of suggestion. In any case, such training may be expected to require less time than is demanded in the preparation of stenographers and bookkeepers. The introduction of such training into the vocational courses of the public school could, by reason of its shortness and its practical application to wage earning, prove the most effective and sure defense against those private schools which are trying to make stenographers of pupils too young, too ignorant or too dull to reap success from their training. This we have further discussed in the chapter that follows. Some experimenting is already being done by the Board of Education with regard to a clerical training in which stenography is not included. It is wise no doubt, that this experiment is being carried on in con-

nection with elementary rather than High School instruction. A short extension course put into an elementary school will be likely to capture children who might otherwise be leaving; but an abbreviated course put into a High School would be likely to tempt pupils who could, if they would, remain for more complete education.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. A general study of office work in New York City needs to be made, with reference to the training of young workers. Present information indicates that:
 - a. Training for a significant proportion of office workers need not include stenography and bookkeeping as vocational subjects.
 - b. There is, in New York City, an under-supply of reliable, well-educated stenographers; and there is a large over-supply of inefficient stenographers who are unsuitable for either stenographic or un-specialized clerical positions.
 - c. Girls find their best business opportunity in stenography, provided they have adequate general education and the necessary personal qualifications.
 - d. Specialized training may be especially insignificant in the case of the youngest wage-earners, because they appear to hold similar or identical positions irrespective of training.
2. Our conclusion, regarding the numbers of non stenographic clerical positions now being held alike by workers trained and untrained in stenography, is not that training is unnecessary, but that a training is needed which does not specialize in stenography or bookkeeping. In any case, drill in fundamental English branches is essential.
3. A course in business training, which does not include specialized training in stenography or bookkeeping, could be made much shorter than a course which includes them.

CHAPTER 7.

PUBLIC CONTROL OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

Any person may open, maintain or close a private commercial school in New York City without restriction. No credentials of any sort are officially demanded.

The Bureau of Attendance may restrict from attendance at private commercial schools any children who are under 16, provided they are not elementary school graduates and the private school does not teach, in conformity to law, the subjects required for such children. But the Bureau of Attendance cannot always know when such children are in attendance at private commercial schools.

The Regents of New York State inspect private commercial schools and offer to the public a list of recommended schools. But Regents' inspection depends upon the invitation of the private schools and the schools' payment to the state of an annual inspection fee of \$20. The Regents' list of recommended schools for Greater New York includes only six names.

One of New York's private commercial schools calls attention, in its printed catalog, to the freedom of commercial schools to come into existence or to continue to exist without question on the part of the public. We quote here something of what is said:

"WHICH SCHOOL WILL YOU ATTEND?

No Doctor, Dentist or Lawyer can practice in the State of New York without having secured a license to do so by having the most rigid examination as to his ability.

These men protect our health and happiness. The state regards these of sufficient importance to guard them zealously.

The most incompetent is privileged to conduct a school.

The only requisites are a gilded sign, some equipment and the rental of a room.

To the unwary such a school has all the ear marks of a reputable institution. Little do they dream of the incompetency that lurks within."

Chapter 7 is based upon the following data:

Material used in previous chapters,
Compulsory education law and Regents' rules.

The harm done by a poor or unscrupulous school is economic in character, and not so obvious, as the catalog states, as that done by malpractice in medicine or law. Hordes of out-of-work people, seeking positions they are incapable of filling, may become a community concern; and, for the sake of both the individual student and the community, there is need to check the present freedom in opening, maintaining or closing private schools concerned with commercial or other instruction.

It should, undoubtedly, be in the power of state or municipal authority to inspect and regulate all educational institutions within state or city limits. As the situation is now, such authority is not clearly defined except in so far as it affects children of compulsory education age. This report has shown that schools of widely different quality offer courses of study similarly described, and charged for at similar cost. Although the public may be aided by certain general rules upon which to base discrimination among schools, there can be no sure protection until authorized inspection and standardized requirements are practically achieved.

REGENTS REGISTRATION.

At the present time the only authoritative step in that direction has been taken by the New York State Board of Regents. This body offers to the public a recommended list of private commercial schools. Any school which meets certain specified conditions may be registered on the recommended list. The rule of procedure is that the applicant for registration shall invite the Regents' inspector to visit his school, and shall pay for this form of State service an annual fee of \$20. We believe that inspectors' visits should not be dependent upon invitation and that no fee should be charged a school in consequence of State inspection.

There is, at present, a confusion of terms in commercial school catalogs that may be in some cases deliberate misrepresentation. A private school may be *incorporated* by the State Department of Education. But incorporation does not carry with it sanction of the courses offered, and no school is entitled to use the term "incorporated" as an equivalent for registration. In certain private schools, particularly those which maintain academic preparatory departments, some subject or subjects may be *approved* for Regents' examinations; but approval for examination does not entitle the school to advertise itself as recommended in the sense that a *registered* school may do it.

A summary of the Regents' requirements for recommended schools is given below. A supplementary schedule shows that, in connection with Rules 1 and 2 the inspector ascertains the number and condition of fire-escapes, the hall space, the character of the stairways, the condition of lavatories, and the system of ventilation, heating and light; also, the number of pupils, the number of rooms for study and recitation, the seating arrangements, the kinds and number of typewriters, and the provision of other equipment. For Rules 4 and 5 he inquires about the number of men and women employed as teachers, and the quality of their training; and he determines what is being taught under the titles of bookkeeping, commercial arithmetic, commercial law, commercial geography, commercial correspondence, commercial English, business writing, rapid calculation, shorthand, typewriting, and other subjects. Furthermore he notes the age of the school, its entrance and graduation requirements, and makes inquiry relative to the school's advertising methods and its guarantee to students.

EXTRACTS FROM REGENTS RULES.

Section 23: A commercial school may be registered as maintaining a satisfactory standard upon the payment of an annual fee of \$20 and upon the report of the Department inspector that it meets the following requirements:

- 1.. Suitable building or rooms for the conduct of its work.
2. Suitable equipment for the courses given by the school.
3. Reputation for fair and honest dealing with its students, and the public.
4. Faculty of teachers whose training has been not less than that required of teachers engaged in similar work in public schools.
5. An approved course of study which includes at least the following subjects: Bookkeeping, commercial arithmetic, commercial law, English, commercial correspondence, business writing, shorthand and typewriting.

Registered commercial schools must file with the University copies of all advertising literature, including catalogs, pamphlets, circulars, etc., and an annual report, on or before July 31st of each year.

No registration certificate, except the one for the current year, shall be publicly displayed.

For examinations in registered commercial schools, see rule 231-b.

Among approximately 100 private commercial schools in Greater New York only six are at the present time registered by the Regents. These are as follows:

PRIVATE COMMERCIAL SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK CITY REGISTERED
BY THE REGENTS 1916-1917.

Eastman Gaines School
Merchants' and Bankers' Business School
The Miller School
Packard Commercial School
Paine Up-town Business School
Pratt Business School

It must not be understood from this that only six schools are qualified for registration; for there are many schools which do not apply for inspection, and some of these give excellent training. Some school managers said the registered list is so small and so little known that they could see no special value in placing their schools' name upon it; a few of the older, well established schools claimed a foothold in the community solid enough to make such advertising unnecessary; one manager said he considered his school superior to some of the schools on the list, and thought that by associating his school's name with the other names, he would lose his high standing. These managers were asked if their attitude would be reversed if (1) the list were considerably increased so that the schools not included on it were conspicuous by their absence, and if (2) considerable publicity were given to the list. In most cases they gave an affirmative answer. But certain educational authorities have pointed out the difficulty in arranging for adequate inspection so long as it remains voluntary on the part of the schools to submit to it; also, the dubiousness of doing advertising which the private schools will regard as effective because of the predisposition of the public schools to keep pupils, if they can, in the public school system.

LEGALIZING THE SCHOOLS.

It would seem that the requirements specified by the Regents are the minimum requirements which any commercial school should have; and that, instead of putting upon an approved list those schools which voluntarily comply with the standard, all schools offering commercial instruction should, by law, be compelled to comply and, thereby, constitute a list of legal schools. In order to make the requirements applicable to schools which definitely specialize in certain subjects such as shorthand, filing, or accounting, and make no claim to a complete commercial course, we would suggest that Rule 5 of Section 23 be so amended that the school will be held responsible for the quality of instruction in only those courses which it claims to offer. In the case of schools which take students who have not passed the age limit for compulsory education, the academic subjects prescribed by law will have to be included. Reference to this matter is made later in the chapter.

The experience of the present investigation has shown that special attention needs to be given to the date of the publication of texts used, especially in those schools in which the use of books is free of charge. We believe the regulations should stipulate that students in typing should be taught to operate at least three different kinds of typewriters of standard manufacture, and that there should be enough class rooms so that studying and reciting need not be done in typewriting rooms when the typewriters are in use. We believe that, wherever the teaching of English and arithmetic is claimed, the manner and amount of teaching should be clearly defined by the school so that the inspector and the public shall know whether these subjects are separately considered, or are merely incidental to stenographic or bookkeeping instruction.

There is nothing, at present, to prevent a new school from coming into existence, or an old school from trying to con-

tinue, with insufficient capitalization. When a school fails it may be the pupils who suffer the brunt of misfortune. It would seem, therefore, that a school, in order to be legal, should be guaranteed for the reputableness and solvency of its owners as well as for the quality of instruction it offers and the condition of its equipment.

THE CRUX OF THE PRIVATE COMMERCIAL SCHOOL SITUATION.

Even though New York City should be able to achieve a state of things whereby safe schools and good schools should prevail in the field of commercial training, the chief difficulty might still be left untouched. Reasonably good training in stenography or bookkeeping is probably to be had in almost any private commercial school, provided the person who undertakes it is mature, intelligent, self-reliant, and well educated in English branches. But, as a rule, the schools have students who are immature, dull or bright as it may happen, and of meagre general education; and in taking such students, the private schools should also take upon themselves the burden of thorough, fundamental training and supplementary general education. This burden, however, the private commercial schools do not in most cases assume. Specific vocational subjects are taught, and a pupil of any degree of fitness or unfitness must do what he can with them. If he fails the school does not take the blame; it points to other students who did not fail. The chief fault lies, then, in the kind of students which private commercial schools are willing to accept for training.

What check can be put upon private schools in the matter of admission of students? The compulsory education law already has power to safeguard the youngest children who may try to enter upon private commercial instruction. All children between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, if they are not employed, or have not an employment certificate, must have

regular schooling for the whole time that public schools are in session. In regard to the substitution of a private school for a public one the law says, in part:

“If any child shall so attend upon instruction elsewhere than at a public school, such instruction shall be at least substantially equivalent to the instruction given children of like age by the public schools of the city in the district in which such child resides; and such attendance shall be for at least as many hours each day as are required of children of like age at public schools; —————.”

“Instruction substantially equivalent” to the instruction given in public schools is, elsewhere in the law, made to include “at least the six common school branches of reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, language and geography, taught in English.” These are elementary school subjects; and no child under sixteen, who is not an elementary school graduate, is free to attend a private commercial school, unless all these subjects are taught there and unless his attendance at the private school is for at least five hours a day, five days a week, nine months of the year. Since it is exceptional for private commercial schools to teach all these subjects or to offer a period of attendance of such duration, it is therefore probable that few, if any, of the non-graduate children under sixteen years of age enrolled at private commercial schools are legally excused from the public schools. The Bureau of Attendance looks after such violations to the extent that it is able to learn of them.

THE INFLUENCE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

Elementary school principals and teachers have an acknowledged influence in the vocational and educational choices which their students make. Such persons can have a special understanding of a pupil’s capacity and needs, and of the limitations of his home environment; their handi-

cap is likely to be in a lack of specific knowledge about the world of occupations and of opportunities for occupational training, which lies outside the public school. In their desire to stay on safe ground they have a tendency to advise pupils generally to refrain from attending a private commercial school, and to enter High School if they can. But if the teacher cannot convince a pupil that success for him, individually, does not lie in private commercial school training; if she cannot show how he can quickly become wage earning in a field acceptable to him, by any route except that of the private school; and if the economic facts make entrance upon a four or three year high school course prohibitive—what can the pupil do but choose the private school?

The experience of this investigation leads to the opinion that the average elementary school graduate is *not ready* for the kind of commercial education which private schools, in general, offer. The aim of the average business school is the manufacture of stenographers and bookkeepers in a hurry. Business wants, however, not more of such workers as it now receives, but better ones. School principals and teachers should have access to information which shows concretely what the demands of business are. They should be able to point out to children the range of office positions which *general education* helps, but which are not dependent upon stenographic or bookkeeping training. They should know that the alternative of industrial work is not to be shunned as undesirable in the case of some of those pupils who are unadapted to office training. And they should bear in mind, as without doubt many of them do, that no one should consider stenographic training who has not normal hearing and sight, who has not reasonably deft fingers, or a degree of nervous energy to aid him in typing; who is not free from noticeable physical defects. Normal posture is

an important consideration, because constant sitting at the typewriter will increase defects. They should, and probably do, know that **no one can count upon success in stenographic work who is not proficient in the writing and speaking of well expressed English**; who has not a good and fairly extensive vocabulary; who is not able to spell; who has not reasonably quick comprehension; and who does not present a good personal appearance. In many positions, one whose speech or appearance are noticeably foreign will find himself handicapped. But if these things were known to the teachers in such a way that they could be put concretely and forcibly to the children, the situation would have more help than it is likely to get from general, unillustrated statement. It is possible that the kind of information we have set forth in Chapter 3 could be useful in this connection.

It is claimed by private schools that they can serve as the door by which a boy or girl may enter business; that, whether or not the pupil makes use of specific training, the position he gets is found with the help of the school; and that it would not have been found, in all likelihood, without that help. This claim has less ground for truth now that it had a few years ago. The activity of free, non-commercial employment bureaus in New York City, carried on by public and private auspices and giving careful attention to the needs of juvenile workers, is increasing at a rate that warrants for these bureaus serious consideration; and it gives to children's advisors in the public schools an answering argument.

EFFECTIVE CONTROL THROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION.

While continuance to enforce the compulsory education law, and the influence of elementary school principals and teachers can help to check the indiscriminate admission of pupils to private commercial instruction, **nothing adequate**

will ever be accomplished until the public school offers a course of training which sets up an effective rivalry to that now offered by private commercial schools. If the public school has not, in all these years, thought it best to offer to elementary school graduates a short, intensive, stenographic course preparing for wage earning, there must have been a reason. And that reason was rightly, no doubt, that such training is not suitable for the average graduate of the elementary school. But we believe that most children who enter private schools are not so determined upon learning *stenography* in the months following graduation, as they are upon learning something, or anything, that will prepare them quickly to earn wages in office positions. They go to private schools because private schools promise or give hope of positions and the course is brief; and they study stenography because stenography is the thing that is offered. **It remains for the public school to take cognizance of the growing need in business for office workers of general training; and to provide that training adequately in a brief, intensive, vocational course.** When such a course has been developed and extended the public school will be able to prevent, to a great extent, the study of stenography by those who ought not to undertake it.

Undoubtedly many of the boys and girls who might apply to the public school for a one-year non-stenographic clerical course would be turned away because of their unfitness for any sort of clerical training. Some of these rejected pupils might then seek private schools; but we believe the clear-cut, frankly explained refusal of the public school to accept the boy or girl in question for clerical training would deter many parents from investing money in private instruction. But only when the public school offers training comparable in length of course with that given in private schools, can public school influence, through rejection, be felt.

Plans for an intensive course should eliminate time waste, without forgetting educational ideals; and, in their special effort to help the pupil to earn his living, these plans should not forget to help him to live. **The more a pupil's years in formal education have to be limited, the more should the school strive to give the pupil, before he leaves it, a little glimpse and understanding of the beauty and wonder of the world he lives in, of his individual capacity for expression, and of his civic responsibilities.** These factors become increasingly necessary as business becomes more and more standardized and offers in work less chance for initiative and individual expression. No course should be too vocational, or too short to take account of them. This the private commercial schools, even though they should modify the general character of their courses to meet the changing demands in business, cannot be expected to do. The private commercial schools, we believe, should reserve their services for students of maturer age. **The younger and more impressionable years belong to the forces of public education.**

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

- 1 All private educational institutions in the state should be compelled to register annually with the State Department of Education.
- 2 Commercial instruction in private schools needs to be standardized and officially supervised.
- 3 The public needs some plan of protection against under-capitalized, insolvent or financially unscrupulous schools. It has been suggested that owners of private educational institutions should be bonded.
- 4 There is no adequate means, at present, on which to base a safe choice among schools, even in the matter of

instruction. The Regents' list of six schools is helpful, but it is limited by its brevity.

- 5 If the Regents' power is to become widely effective, the department of inspection should be given the necessary appropriation and authority to visit all schools irrespective of the schools' consent or invitation; to require specific changes or improvements; or, if necessary, to order schools closed. No fee should be charged a school as a condition of such inspection. In place of an unrepresentative recommended list, we should have a list of all schools which are recognized as having a legal right to exist.
- 6 But adequate commercial instruction and good equipment, thus assured, will not cover the most important difficulty in the situation—which is the admission of persons to the schools who are too young, ignorant or dull to profit by the instruction.
- 7 It should be required of private commercial schools to send to the Bureau of Attendance the names of all pupils who come under the compulsory education law. The Bureau of Attendance could then find out whether the pupils are receiving the program of instruction which the law requires.
- 8 If those persons who unwisely enter private commercial schools, are above the age of compulsory education no authority can touch the situation. The hope of solution will be for the public school to go as far as practicable in meeting the desire of young people for brief, vocational training in an acceptable field of work. That is, the establishment of an effective rivalry is the public school's only means of controlling the worst feature of the private commercial school situation.
- 9 If the public school offers a short course, comparable in length and practicability to the courses offered in private schools, it may be expected to refuse to admit to that course girls and boys who are unsuitable or not

ready for clerical work. Of course, some of the refused applicants will then turn to the private schools; but we believe that parents, in general, can be influenced by the public school's decision.

- 10 The private commercial schools cannot be expected, in their courses, to consider the broader aspects and ideals of education. Thus the younger and more impressionable years of students' lives belong to the forces of public education.

A SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS.

To make private schools safe, in New York City, there is need for:

The issuing of a State license, without which it should be illegal to open or maintain any sort of private educational institution.

Annual registration of all private educational institutions with the State Department of Education. Registration should be compulsory upon these institutions.

State censorship of advertising material. It should be required of the schools to file with the State Department of Education, samples of all forms used.

Official standardization of course of study, entrance requirements, preparation of teachers, and equipment. Also, schools should furnish to the State evidence of solvency and sufficient capitalization.

Regular official inspection and supervision, with power to revoke licenses.

A published official list of schools which are legally entitled to exist.

To keep unfit pupils from entering private commercial schools, there is need for:

Enforcement of the compulsory education law. Schools enrolling pupils who are under the law, should be required to report the names of such pupils to the Bureau of Attendance. The Bureau of Attendance would then determine whether the pupils are being instructed in conformity to law; and if necessary, could compel their return to the public schools.

Popular propaganda, directed to parents and public school children, which will inform them convincingly that the average eighth-grade pupil is not ready to study stenography; that success in any kind of office

position, is likely to depend upon good academic preparation; and that the alternative of factory work need not be shunned, since such work may be both dignified and profitable.

Public school competition, whereby the public schools offer, like the private schools, a brief vocational extension course for office training. Such a course, however, should not include stenography and it should be refused to unsuitable candidates. Parents of children thus refused should be informed of the fact and the reason.

Publicity with regard to the proportionate number of pupils who leave private commercial schools before graduation Schools should be required to send to the State Department of Education, lists of names of persons entered and graduated within the year.

To raise the standard of commercial education, there is need for:

Some recognized organization, such as the Chamber of Commerce, the State Association of Commercial Schools, or the League of Business Opportunities for Women, to formulate a standard higher than the legal one and to publish a list of schools which conform to it.

APPENDIX.

TABLE 12: OFFICE POSITIONS HELD BY UNTRAINED BOYS
14 TO 18 YEARS OF AGE INCLUSIVE. BUREAU OF ATTENDANCE
RECORDS, 1915.

Bookkeepers 4 Wage Range \$5-9 Age Range 16

| BUSINESS | KIND OF WORK | WAGE | AGE |
|------------------------|--|--------|-----|
| Furniture and Fixture. | Asst. bookkeeper. Typewrites all bills and takes care of ledger..... | \$9.00 | 16 |
| Embroidery and Lace. | Asst. bookkeeper. Enters orders received and checks deliveries..... | 8.00 | 16 |
| Clothing—Outer | Bookkeeper | 7.00 | 16 |
| Furniture and Fixture. | Asst. bookkeeper | 5.00 | 16 |

Clerks 95 Wage Range \$3-16 Age Range 14-18

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--|---------|----|
| Railroad | Billing clerk | \$16.00 | 17 |
| Railroad | Receives all freight shipped to N. Y. and collected by wagon..... | 12.00 | 17 |
| Banking and Broker-age | Weighing and in charge of testing coffee | 11.00 | 18 |
| Clothing—Outer | Helper, shipping department..... | 11.00 | 17 |
| Civil Service..... | Clerk | 10.00 | 18 |
| Stationery | General office-worker | 10.00 | 18 |
| Banking and Broker-age | Junior clerk. Statistical work..... | 10.00 | 18 |
| Toilet Articles..... | Shipper. Makes out bills and directs drivers | 10.00 | 18 |
| Shirtwaists—Ladies ... | Asst. buyer and receiving clerk..... | 10.00 | 17 |
| Advertising | Junior clerk. Secretary to member of firm | 9.25 | 17 |
| Real Estate..... | Office asst. File clerk and general office-worker | 9.00 | 18 |
| Department Store..... | Newspaper clipping. General office work | 9.00 | 18 |
| Dry Goods and Notions | Asst. receiving clerk..... | 9.00 | 17 |
| Groceries | Enters bills and checks orders..... | 9.00 | 17 |
| Wall Paper..... | Order clerk | 9.00 | 17 |
| Butcher | Shipping clerk | 9.00 | 17 |
| Dry Goods and Notions | Bill clerk | 8.50 | 17 |
| Dry Goods and Notions | Clerical worker and salesman..... | 8.00 | 18 |
| Clothing—Outer | Replaces orders for shipment..... | 8.00 | 18 |
| Clothing—Outer | Makes out tickets. Charges goods..... | 8.00 | 17 |
| Department Store..... | Asst. advertising manager. Attends to transferring and correcting..... | 8.00 | 17 |

| BUSINESS | KIND OF WORK | WAGE | AGE |
|-------------------------|--|------|-----|
| Printing and Publishing | Fills orders. Order clerk..... | 8.00 | 17 |
| Printing and Publishing | Keeps account of manuscripts..... | 8.00 | 17 |
| Banking and Brokerage | Clerical worker | 8.00 | 17 |
| Banking and Brokerage | General office worker. Does filing and errands | 8.00 | 17 |
| Advertising | Office worker | 8.00 | 17 |
| Motor Supplies | Shipping clerk | 8.00 | 16 |
| Hardware | Asst. shipping clerk. Ships goods..... | 8.00 | 16 |
| Feathers | Helper on shipping..... | 8.00 | 16 |
| Newspaper | Attendant, in charge of four boys..... | 7.50 | 16 |
| Cement and Stone | Salesman's clerk | 7.50 | 16 |
| Novelties | Prepares orders for shipment..... | 7.50 | 16 |
| Confectionery | Ships orders | 7.00 | 18 |
| Rubber Products | Mail clerk and office assistant..... | 7.00 | 18 |
| Jewelry | Asst. shipping clerk. Prepares orders for shipment | 7.00 | 17 |
| Banking and Brokerage | Stock boy. Fills stock cards..... | 7.00 | 17 |
| Dressmaking | Asst. shipping clerk..... | 7.00 | 17 |
| Insurance | Changes names of beneficiaries in policies | 7.00 | 17 |
| Groceries | Asst. to secretary. General office work. | 7.00 | 17 |
| Jewelry | Office and clerical work..... | 7.00 | 17 |
| Furniture and Fixture | File clerk | 7.00 | 17 |
| Insurance | Policy checker | 7.00 | 17 |
| Dental Supplies | Shipping clerk. Ships goods..... | 7.00 | 17 |
| Automobile | Junior clerk. General office worker... | 7.00 | 16 |
| Drugs and Medicines | Records charges or overcharges and errors | 7.00 | 16 |
| Dressmaking | Shipping clerk, packer, etc..... | 7.00 | 16 |
| Mail Order House | File clerk. Delivers packages to chutes | 7.00 | 16 |
| Bottle Cap Making | Does clerical work for Supt..... | 7.00 | 15 |
| Glassware and China | Receives goods and checks them..... | 7.00 | 14 |
| Insurance | Mail clerk. Stamps and seals envelopes | 7.00 | 14 |
| Banking and Brokerage | Clerical and general office worker..... | 6.25 | 17 |
| Civil Service | First grade clerk. Does filing and indexing | 6.25 | 17 |
| Steamship | Does bookkeeping and filing. Keeps records | 6.25 | 16 |
| Department Store | Sends out letters and catalogs..... | 6.00 | 18 |
| Department Store | Sample clerk | 6.00 | 18 |
| Art Work | Clerical worker | 6.00 | 17 |
| Photography | Information boy. Gives information, takes orders | 6.00 | 17 |
| Woolens | Files correspondence, etc..... | 6.00 | 17 |

| BUSINESS | KIND OF WORK | WAGE | AGE |
|------------------------------------|--|------|-----|
| Dressmaking | Packs orders for shipment..... | 6.00 | 17 |
| Tobacco | Prepares orders for shipment..... | 6.00 | 17 |
| Clothing—Outer | Ships goods, makes out labor tickets, gives out goods to cut..... | 6.00 | 17 |
| Dry Goods and No- tions | Receipt clerk | 6.00 | 17 |
| Advertising | Does all office work and filing..... | 6.00 | 17 |
| Printing & Publishing.. | Keeps time. Typist..... | 6.00 | 16 |
| Automobiles | Ships goods | 6.00 | 16 |
| Banking and Broker- age | Stock boy—clerical work and errands.. | 6.00 | 16 |
| Printing and Publish- ing | Filing clerk | 6.00 | 16 |
| Clothing—Outer | Asst. shipping clerk..... | 6.00 | 16 |
| Clothing—Outer | Files letters and bills. Opens mail.... | 6.00 | 15 |
| Printing and Publish- ing | Files letters | 5.50 | 16 |
| Stationery | Sample clerk. Shows stock..... | 5.50 | 16 |
| Hat, Cap, Bonnet..... | Assistant shipping clerk..... | 5.00 | 18 |
| Law and Collections.. | Law clerk Answers cases on calendar. Does office work..... | 5.00 | 17 |
| Stationery | Shipping clerk | 5.00 | 17 |
| Butcher | Files receipts and claims..... | 5.00 | 17 |
| Novelties | Packs, ships and delivers goods..... | 5.00 | 17 |
| | Packs, ships and does general work.... | 5.00 | 17 |
| Banking and Broker- age | Board boy. Puts up quotations on stock board | 5.00 | 17 |
| Dry Goods and No- tions | Shipping clerk | 5.00 | 17 |
| Button Making | Ships goods. Attends to stock..... | 5.00 | 17 |
| Real Estate | General office worker. Care of receipts, collecting rents, etc..... | 5.00 | 16 |
| Clothing—Outer | Helper. General office worker..... | 5.00 | 16 |
| Tobacco | Packs, stamps and does errands..... | 5.00 | 16 |
| Printing and Publish- ing | Stamps mails. Deposits same in post- office | 5.00 | 16 |
| Printing and Publish- ing | Filing clerk | 5.00 | 15 |
| Clothing—Outer | Helper in shipping department..... | 5.00 | 15 |
| Jewelry | General utility worker. Office work and errands | 5.00 | 15 |
| Department Store..... | Collects goods from different depart- ments | 4.00 | 16 |
| Clothing—Outer | Helper in shipping department..... | 4.00 | 16 |
| Clothing—Outer | Asst. shipping clerk..... | 4.00 | 16 |
| Painting | Assistant clerk. Answers bell..... | 4.00 | 15 |
| Glassware and China.. | Billing clerk | 3.00 | 16 |
| Not reported | Receiving clerk | ... | 16 |

Errand-Messengers 3 Wage Range \$4-5 Age-Range 14-16

| BUSINESS | KIND OF WORK | WAGE | AGE |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------|-----|
| Hotel and Restaurant | Office work and messenger..... | \$5.00 | 16 |
| Silk Making | Stock book and errands..... | 4.50 | 16 |
| Dressing | Helps bookkeeper. Does errands..... | 4.00 | 14 |

Office Boys 47 Wage Range \$2-8 Age Range 14-18

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--------|----|
| Building and Contracting | Office boy. Switchboard operator..... | \$8.00 | 16 |
| Banking and Brokerage | Clerical worker | 8.00 | 16 |
| Express and Trucking | Helper in office..... | 8.00 | 16 |
| Produce | Office boy | 7.50 | 16 |
| Printing and Publishing | Sub-clerical worker | 7.00 | 17 |
| Leather and Skin..... | Typist | 7.00 | 16 |
| Advertising | Office boy. Does errands..... | 7.00 | 15 |
| Advertising | Office boy. Mail clerk..... | 6.00 | 17 |
| Building and Contracting | Office boy. Answers telephone..... | 6.00 | 17 |
| Furniture and Fixture..... | Office boy. Telephone work and mailing | 6.00 | 16 |
| Buttons | Office boy. Runs errands..... | 6.00 | 16 |
| Metal, Steel, Iron..... | Office clerk | 6.00 | 16 |
| Department Store..... | Office boy. Does filing and general office work | 6.00 | 16 |
| Hardware | Office boy | 6.00 | 16 |
| Banking and Brokerage | Clerical worker and errand boy..... | 6.00 | 16 |
| Steamship | Office boy. Telephone work and mailing | 6.00 | 16 |
| Dry Goods and Notions..... | Does errands and filing..... | 6.00 | 15 |
| Building and Contracting | Sub-clerical worker | 5.50 | 16 |
| Clothing—Outer | Office boy | 5.00 | 18 |
| Neckwear | Office and errand boy..... | 5.00 | 17 |
| Feathers | Office and errand boy..... | 5.00 | 17 |
| Painting | Office and telephone boy. Receives and announces visitors | 5.00 | 17 |
| Musical Instruments | Office boy. Marks price of goods on sales slips | 5.00 | 17 |
| Metal, Steel, Iron..... | Does telephone work and mailing. Errand boy | 5.00 | 17 |
| Lighting Fixtures..... | Office, errand and telephone boy. Addresses letters | 5.00 | 16 |
| Liquors | Office, switchboard and errand boy..... | 5.00 | 16 |
| Butcher | Office, mail and errand boy..... | 5.00 | 16 |
| Express and Trucking | Office and errand boy..... | 5.00 | 16 |
| Telephone | Messenger and office boy. Files papers..... | 5.00 | 15 |
| Clothing—Outer | Takes care of mail books..... | 5.00 | 15 |

| BUSINESS | KIND OF WORK | WAGE | AGE |
|-----------------------------|--|------|-----|
| Lithographing | Directs callers. Does errands..... | 5.00 | 15 |
| Furniture and Fixtures..... | Office, errand and telephone boy..... | 5.00 | 15 |
| Electrical Appliances..... | Office, errand and telephone boy. Receives goods | 5.00 | 15 |
| Law and Collections.. | Office boy. Answers bells and telephone calls | 5.00 | 14 |
| Hardware | Office boy | 4.50 | 16 |
| Machinery | Office boy. Cleans office. Does errands | 4.50 | 14 |
| Groceries | Office, telephone and errand boy..... | 4.00 | 16 |
| Glassware and China..... | Office, telephone and mail boy. Messenger | 4.00 | 16 |
| Painting | Errand and telephone boy. Does typing and takes care of samples..... | 4.00 | 16 |
| Oil Products..... | Watch-office boy | 4.00 | 15 |
| Novelties | Office boy | 4.00 | 15 |
| Real Estate..... | Office, mail and telephone boy..... | 4.00 | 15 |
| Religion | Does light bookkeeping and switchboard work | 4.00 | 15 |
| Hardware | Addresses envelopes. Does errands.... | 4.00 | 14 |
| Drugs and Medicines.. | Office boy. Answers bells..... | 4.00 | 14 |
| Doctor | Office boy—during summer and after school | 2.00 | 15 |
| Woolens | Office boy | ... | 15 |

TABLE 13: OFFICE POSITIONS HELD BY UNTRAINED GIRLS 14 TO 18 YEARS OF AGE INCLUSIVE. BUREAU OF ATTENDANCE RECORDS, 1915.

Addressers 3 Wage Range \$6 Age Range 16-17

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------|----|
| Mail Order House..... | Addresses mail | \$6.00 | 17 |
| Mail Order House..... | Addresses envelopes | 6.00 | 16 |
| Printing and Publishing | Addresses envelopes | 6.00 | 16 |

Bookkeepers 7 Wage Range \$5-9 Age Range 14-17

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--------|----|
| Dressmaking | Answers letters and keeps books..... | \$9.00 | 17 |
| Hat, Cap, Bonnet..... | Does all bookkeeping for firm..... | 7.00 | 16 |
| Machinery | Makes entries. Takes dictation, copies letters | 5.00 | 15 |
| Express and Trucking..... | Takes charge of books for father..... | 5.00 | 15 |
| Furniture and Fixture..... | Answers telephone; correspondence work. Keeps the books..... | 5.00 | 15 |
| Dressmaking | Enters orders | 5.00 | 14 |
| Steamship | Balances accounts for father..... | ... | 17 |

Cashiers 8 Wage Range \$2.50-9 Age Range 14-17

| BUSINESS | KIND OF WORK | WAGE | AGE |
|----------------------------|---|--------|-----|
| Clothing—Outer | Cashier. Does some bookkeeping..... | \$9.00 | 15 |
| Department Store | Takes cash, checks parcels..... | 8.00 | 17 |
| Butcher | Cashier | 8.00 | 17 |
| Department Store | Tallies time of employees. Receives money for sales..... | 7.00 | 16 |
| Groceries | Sits at register and makes change..... | 6.00 | 14 |
| Hotel and Restaurant | Takes charge of cash..... | 5.00 | 16 |
| Department Store | Cashier and packer..... | 5.00 | 17 |
| Butcher | Cashier and bookkeeper..... | 5.00 | 16 |

Clerks 45 Wage Range \$3.50-10 Age Range 14-18

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---------|----|
| Tobacco | Factory pay roll clerk..... | \$10.00 | 18 |
| Department Store..... | Keeps records of correspondence..... | 10.00 | 18 |
| Dressmaking | Keeps track of material given out..... | 10.00 | 17 |
| Advertising | Graphotype operator | 10.00 | 15 |
| Department Store..... | Files orders | ... | 14 |
| Printing and Publishing | Does posting and billing. Asst. book- keeper | 9.00 | 18 |
| Printing and Publishing | Files letters. Asst. bookkeeper..... | 8.00 | 18 |
| Department Store..... | Addressograph machine operator..... | 8.00 | 17 |
| Dry Goods and Notions | Shipping clerk | 8.00 | 17 |
| Printing and Publishing | Makes out bills..... | 8.00 | 17 |
| Banking and Brokerage | Keeps track of money received and files bills | 8.00 | 16 |
| Embroidery and Lace.. | Marks goods | 7.50 | 18 |
| Printing and Publishing | Files bills | 7.00 | 18 |
| Department Store..... | Writes call checks..... | 7.00 | 17 |
| Religion | Does typing | 7.00 | 17 |
| Department Store..... | Files and addresses letters..... | 7.00 | 16 |
| Photographing | Does general office work..... | 7.00 | 16 |
| Shirtwaists—Ladies | Asst. bookkeeper | 7.00 | 17 |
| Tobacco | Tabulates sheets. Does filing..... | 6.50 | 16 |
| Stationery | Files letters. Asst. bookkeeper..... | 6.00 | 17 |
| Mail Order House..... | Fills out blanks for customers..... | 6.00 | 17 |
| Clothing+Outer | Keeps accounts of received goods.... | 6.00 | 16 |
| Clothing—Outer | Cuts tickets | 6.00 | 16 |
| Agricultural | Printer. Works at stenciling and esti- mates | 6.00 | 16 |
| Mail Order House.... | Writes letters | 6.00 | 16 |
| Department Store..... | Attends to mail, makes out bills and keeps books | 6.00 | 15 |
| Department Store..... | Attends to mail orders..... | 5.00 | 15 |
| Feathers | Charges accounts | 6.00 | 15 |
| Medical Instruments.. | Does general office work..... | 5.50 | 16 |
| Department Store..... | Audits due bills..... | 5.00 | 18 |
| Department Store..... | Enters sales. Turns in amounts to cashier at end of month..... | 5.00 | 18 |

| BUSINESS | KIND OF WORK | WAGE | AGE |
|-------------------------|---|------|---------|
| Department Store..... | Sorts bills. Looks up orders..... | 5.00 | 17 |
| Department Store..... | Answers telephone. Looks up orders.. | 5.00 | 17 |
| Printing and Publishing | Files bills | 5.00 | 16 |
| Pattern Making..... | Files order cards..... | 5.00 | 16 |
| Clothing—Outer | Does clerical work..... | 5.00 | 16 |
| Department Store..... | Entry clerk. Puts checks on boxes.... | 5.00 | 16 |
| Printing and Publishing | Addresses envelopes. Files cards.... | 5.00 | 15 |
| Department Store..... | Clerk in mail order dept..... | 4.50 | 17 |
| Department Store..... | Checks up commission of clerks..... | 4.50 | 16 |
| | | | (lunch) |
| Department Store..... | Keeps track of appointments in altera- tion department | 4.00 | 16 |
| Department Store..... | Enters bills in books..... | 4.00 | 17 |
| Department Store..... | Files letters. Answers telephone..... | 4.00 | 16 |
| Department Store..... | Does general office work..... | 4.00 | 17 |

News Clipper 1 Wage Range \$5 Age Range 17

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|--------|----|
| Newspaper | Cuts clippings from papers and pastes them | \$5.00 | 17 |
|-----------------|---|--------|----|

Telephone Operator 1 Wage Range \$5 Age Range 17

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------|----|
| Department Store..... | Calls up self charges..... | \$5.00 | 17 |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------|----|

TABLE 14: OFFICE POSITIONS HELD BY BOYS 14 TO 18 YEARS
OF AGE WHO HAVE HAD COMMERCIAL TRAINING. BUREAU OF
ATTENDANCE RECORDS, 1915.

Bookkeepers 2 Wage Range \$8-10 Age Range 17

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|---------|----|
| Roofing | Keeps accounts | \$10.00 | 17 |
| Leather and Skins | Asst. bookkeeper | 8.00 | 17 |

Clerks 12 Wage Range \$4.50-10 Age Range 15-18

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---------|----|
| Instruction | Shipping clerk | \$10.00 | 17 |
| Electrical Appliances.. | Shipping clerk. Gets orders ready and ships them. Also receives goods... | 8.50 | 17 |
| Embroidery and Lace.. | Does filing, indexing and typing..... | 8.00 | 16 |
| Railroads | Filing clerk | 6.25 | 17 |
| Law and Collections.. | Does typing and filing..... | 6.00 | 18 |
| Machinery | General office worker..... | 6.00 | 17 |
| Plumbing | Keeps charges and letter books..... | 6.00 | 16 |

| BUSINESS | KIND OF WORK | WAGE | AGE |
|-----------------------|---|------|-----|
| Stationery | Packs orders for delivery..... | 6.00 | 16 |
| Tobacco | Sends out letters. Does stamping..... | 5.50 | 16 |
| Engineering and Motor | | | |
| Supplies | Does filing and order work..... | 5.00 | 16 |
| Steamship Lines..... | Mail clerk. Folds and inserts circulars | 5.00 | 16 |
| Mail Order House..... | Checks invoices. Does billing and mailing | 4.50 | 15 |

Copy Holder 1 Wage Range \$5 Age Range 17

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------|----|
| Printing and Publishing | Copy holder for proof reader..... | \$5.00 | 17 |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------|----|

Office Boys 7 Wage Range \$4-6 Age Range 14-17

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--------|----|
| Furniture and Fixtures. | Office and mail boy. Does errands..... | \$6.00 | 16 |
| Amusement | Office boy | 5.00 | 17 |
| Architecture | Office boy. Files drawings..... | 5.00 | 16 |
| Department Store..... | Office boy. Does clerical and telephone work | 5.00 | 15 |
| Law and Collections... | Does minor clerical work and errands.. | 5.00 | 15 |
| Real Estate..... | Does general office work and errands.. | 4.50 | 17 |
| Drugs and Medicines.. | Office boy | 4.00 | 14 |

Stenographers and Typists 4 Wage Range \$9-12 Age Range 15-18

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|----|
| Electricity and Gas.... | Stenographer and typist..... | \$12.00 | 18 |
| Railroad | Correspondence. Enters freight cards. | 10.00 | 18 |
| Automobile | Stenographer and typist..... | 10.00 | 17 |
| Printing and Publishing | Typist | 9.00 | 15 |

TABLE 15: OFFICE POSITIONS HELD BY GIRLS 14 TO 18 YEARS OF AGE WHO HAVE HAD COMMERCIAL TRAINING. BUREAU OF ATTENDANCE OF RECORDS, 1915.

Bookkeepers 6 Wage Range \$6-8 Age Range 15-17

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--------|----|
| Automobile | Asst. bookkeeper. Does general office work. Enters charges in books.... | \$8.00 | 17 |
| Department Store..... | Does billing. Answers telephone. Looks up charges | 7.00 | 17 |
| Dental Supplies..... | Enters charges. Assists in bookkeeping | 6.00 | 17 |
| Printing & Publishing | Keeps book and accounts..... | 6.00 | 15 |
| Plumbing | Makes out bills..... | ... | 17 |
| Funeral—Undertaking.. | Bookkeeper and stenographer for father | ... | 17 |

Cashier 1**Wage Range \$6****Age Range 17**

| BUSINESS | KIND OF WORK | WAGE | AGE |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|--------|-----|
| Groceries | Does bookkeeping and makes change.. | \$6.00 | 17 |

Clerks 15**Wage Range \$3.50-9****Age Range 14-18**

| | | | |
|--|--|--------|----|
| Glove Making..... | Does general office work..... | \$9.00 | 18 |
| Furniture and Fixtures.Comptometer operator ..... | ..... | 8.00 | 17 |
| Printing & Publishing.Files letters. Asst. bookkeeper..... | ..... | 8.00 | 18 |
| Printing & Publishing.Files bills ..... | ..... | 7.00 | 18 |
| Drugs and Medicines.Operates adding machine..... | ..... | 7.00 | 17 |
| Printing & Publishing.Addresses envelopes ..... | ..... | 7.00 | 17 |
| Tobacco | Asst. bookkeeper | 6.50 | 16 |
| Instruction | Does typing | 6.00 | 18 |
| Stationery | Files letters. Asst. bookkeeper..... | 6.00 | 17 |
| Mail Order House..... | Enters orders in books. Keeps monthly totals | 5.50 | 17 |
| Mail Order House..... | Writes and keeps account of mail..... | 5.00 | 17 |
| Medical Instruments...Answers telephone and takes orders.... | ..... | 5.00 | 17 |
| Mail Order House..... | Sends out requisitions..... | 5.00 | 16 |
| Glassware and China...Does clerical work, filing, etc..... | ..... | 5.00 | 15 |
| Box Making..... | Answers telephone and enters bills.... | 5.00 | 15 |
| Drugs and Medicines..Makes out bills and transfers..... | ..... | 5.00 | 14 |
| Feathers | Addresses mail | 3.50 | 14 |

Telephone Operators 2**Wage Range \$6-8
Age Range 16-18**

| | | | |
|---|---|--------|----|
| Clothing—Outer | Correspondence and billing. Does typing | \$8.00 | 18 |
| Furniture and Fixtures.Does filing and writing..... | ..... | 6.00 | 16 |

Stenographers and Typists 27**Wage Range \$5.50-12
Age Range 16-19**

| | | | |
|---|---|---------|----|
| Law and Collections..Law clerk ..... | ..... | \$12.00 | 19 |
| Advertising | Does secretarial work..... | 12.00 | 19 |
| Dressmaking | Does bookkeeping and stenography.... | 12.00 | 18 |
| Automobiles | Works on pay roll, books, letters, etc... | 12.00 | 17 |
| Liquors | Keeps track of orders and letters..... | 12.00 | 17 |
| Tobacco | Takes dictation | 10.00 | 18 |
| Civil Service | Keeps records | 10.00 | 16 |
| Box Making..... | Stenography and bookkeeping..... | 9.00 | 16 |
| Printing & Publishing.Dictation of letters..... | ..... | 8.75 | 16 |
| Mining and Mining Products | Takes dictation. Does copying..... | 8.00 | 18 |
| Real Estate..... | Has entire charge of office dictation... | 7.00 | 19 |
| Embroidery and Lace..Does office work..... | ..... | 7.00 | 17 |

| BUSINESS | KIND OF WORK | WAGE | AGE |
|----------------------------|---|------|-----|
| Department Store..... | Files bills. Does typing..... | 7.00 | 17 |
| Express and Trucking..... | Does bookkeeping. Receives and answers mail | 7.00 | 17 |
| Printing & Publishing..... | Takes dictation. Does office work..... | 7.00 | 16 |
| Dressmaking | Switchboard work and correspondence. | 7.00 | 16 |
| Law and Collections..... | Copies and addresses envelopes..... | 6.25 | 17 |
| Law and Collections..... | Types all legal work..... | 6.00 | 19 |
| Hotel and Restaurants..... | Does typing and stenography..... | 6.00 | 17 |
| Law—Collections | Types letters | 6.00 | 17 |
| Funeral—Undertaking..... | Keeps accounts of books. Types charges | 6.00 | 17 |
| Department Store..... | Fills in circular letters..... | 6.00 | 17 |
| Mail Order House..... | Does typing | 6.00 | 17 |
| Real Estate..... | Types and files letters..... | 6.00 | 16 |
| Printing & Publishing..... | Types letters to subscribers..... | 6.00 | 16 |
| Department Store..... | Makes out bills..... | 5.50 | 17 |
| Drugs and Medicines.. | Does typing | ... | 18 |

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